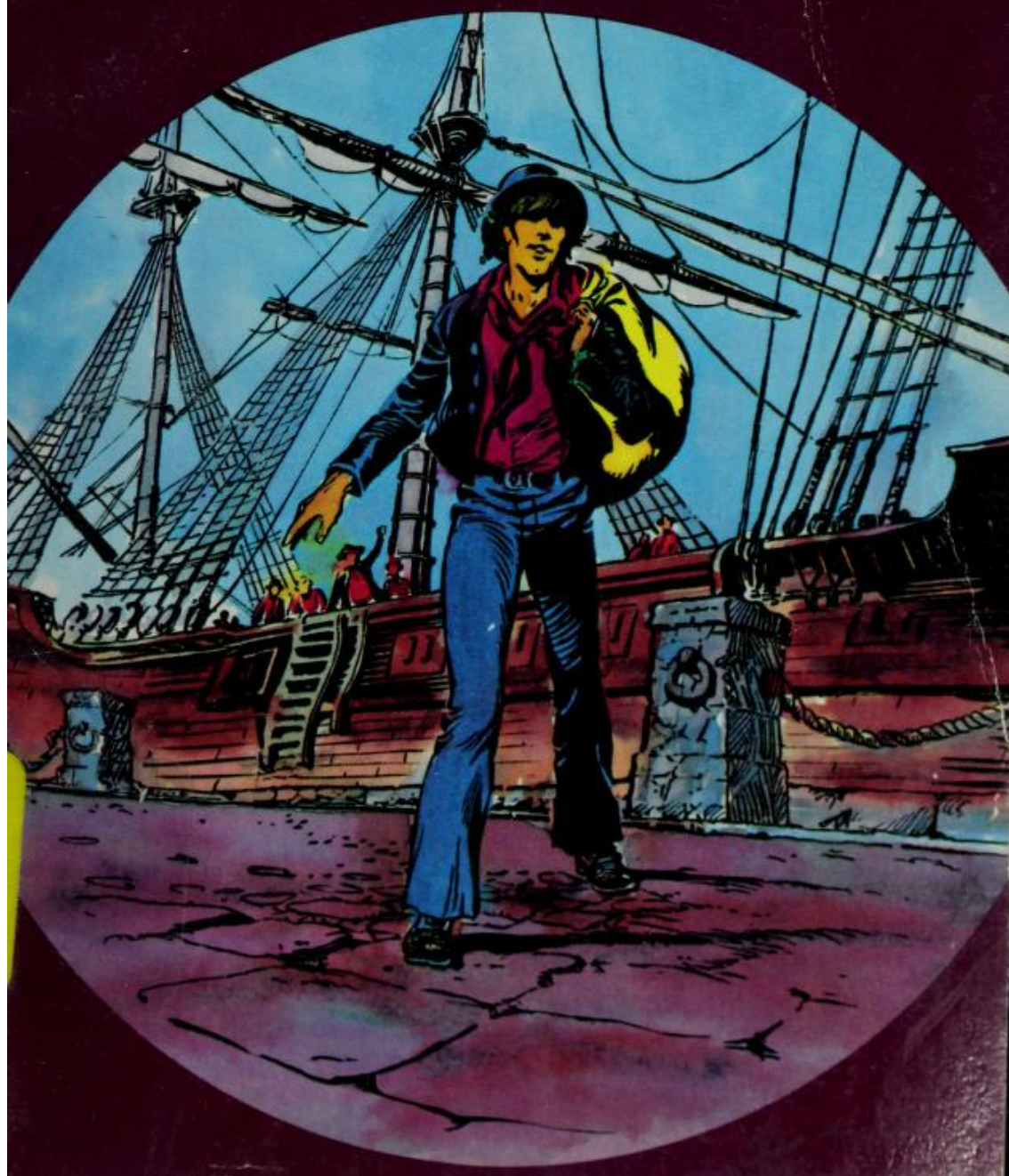


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HERMAN MELVILLE

Billy Budd



Billy Budd

Herman Melville



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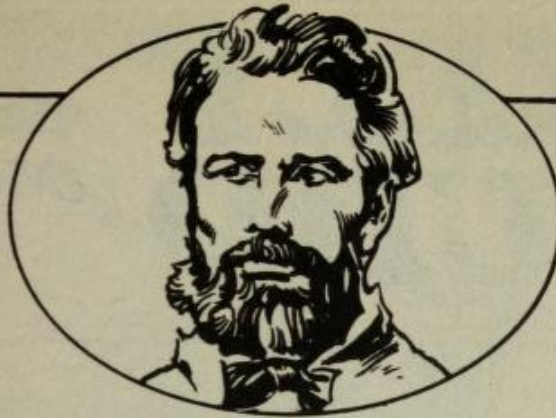
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about the author

Herman Melville was born in 1819. His formal education ended in 1834, at age fifteen. For a time he was both clerk and school teacher, but the sea was his first love. He became a cabin boy on a merchant ship bound for England. Later, in 1841, Melville joined the crew of a whaling ship, the *Acushnet*, where he learned much of the background for *Moby Dick*.

Melville was influenced by the writing of Nathaniel Hawthorne and dedicated *Moby Dick* to him. Melville felt that Hawthorne had an insight into human nature that few could surpass.

Melville, too, knew mankind mainly from living in many cultures. His life with the Taipis, cannibal natives, led him to write *Typee*. From a mutiny he experienced, he wrote *Omoo*. One of his later books, and most heart-rending is *Billy Budd*—the story of a young and severely abused seaman.

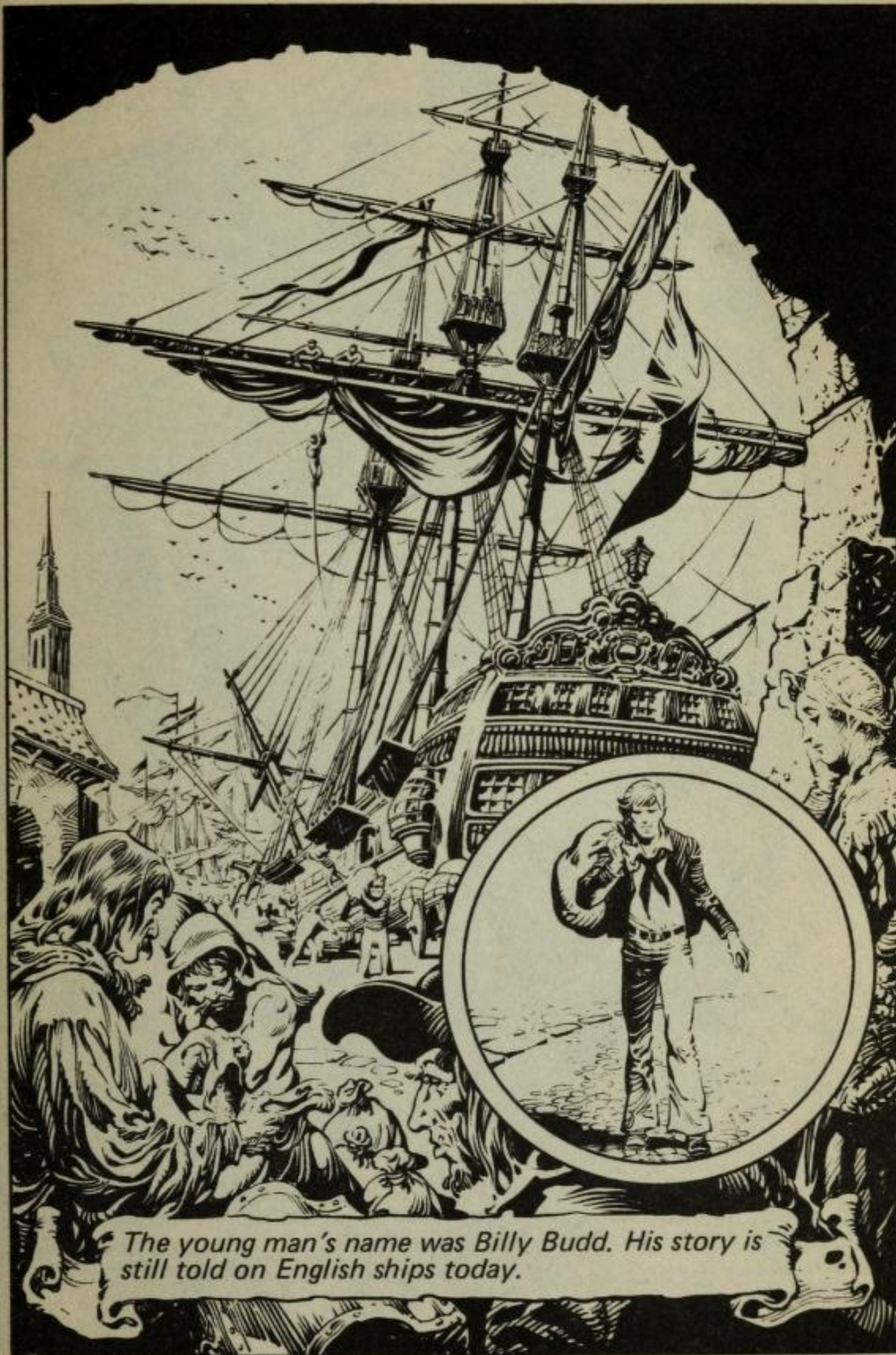
In spite of his unusual creative ability, Melville spent nineteen years of his life as a customs officer in the ports of New York City. Not until after his death was he truly appreciated as an author. Today *Moby Dick* is considered to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, American novel.

BILLY BUDD

**Herman
Melville**

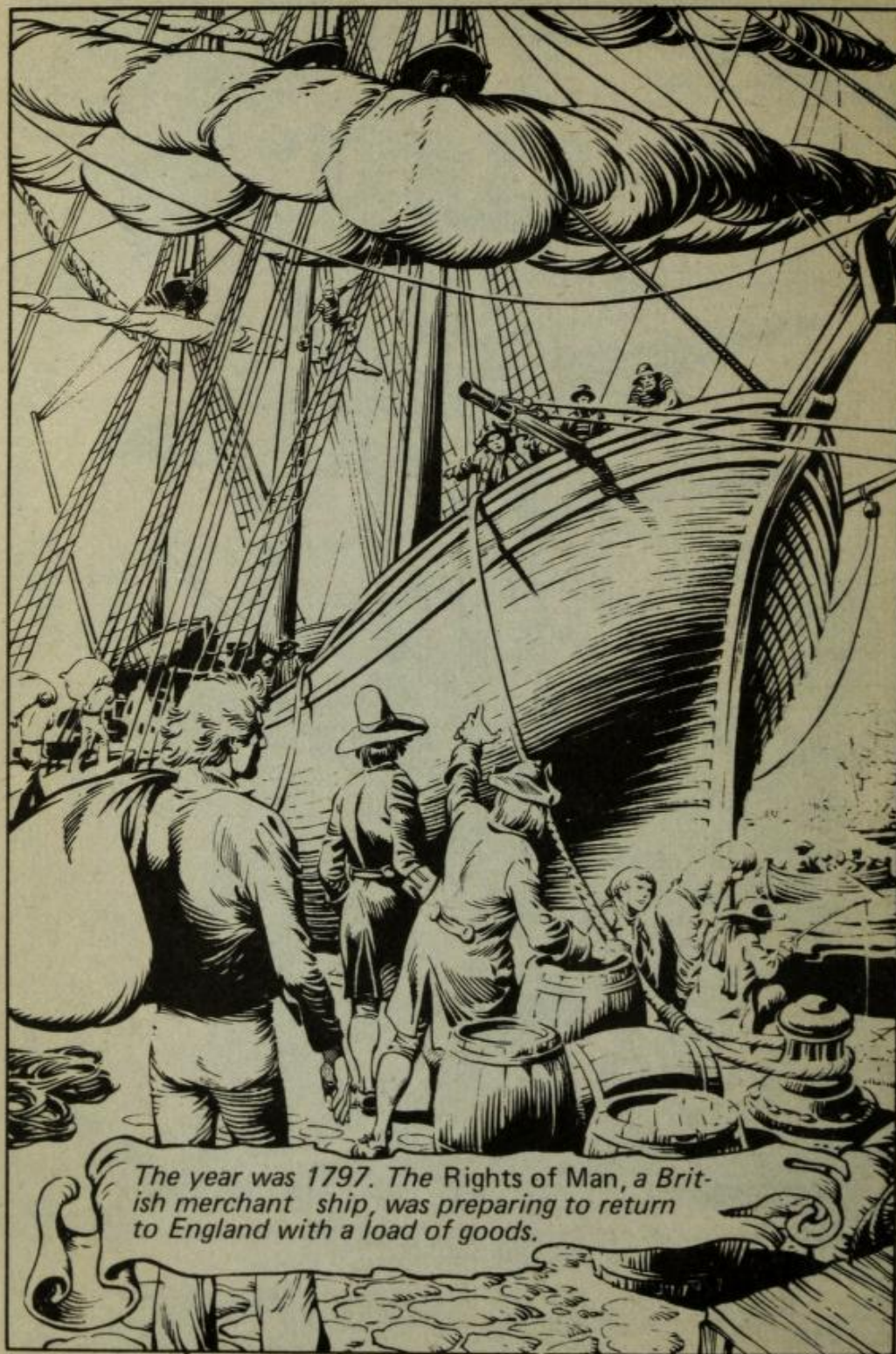


Billy Budd

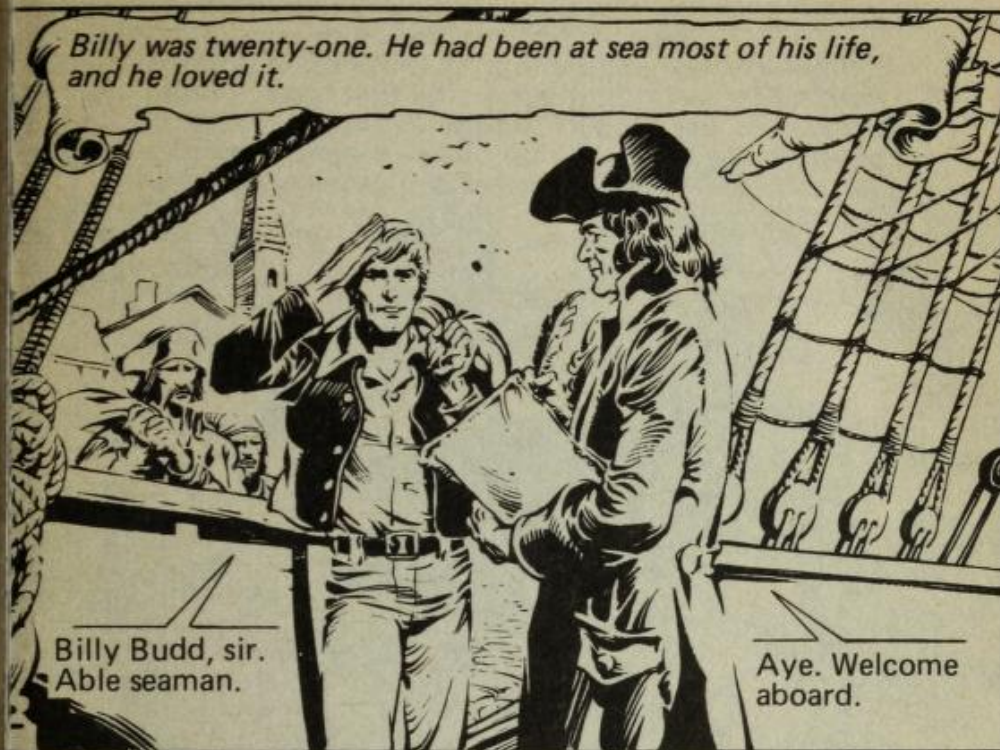


The young man's name was Billy Budd. His story is still told on English ships today.

POCKET CLASSICS



Billy Budd



POCKET CLASSICS

At the start of any trip, the crew was divided into two "watches" or periods of work. The first mate chose someone for the larboard watch. The second mate then chose a man for the starboard or right watch. Back and forth it went between the mates until every man was chosen.

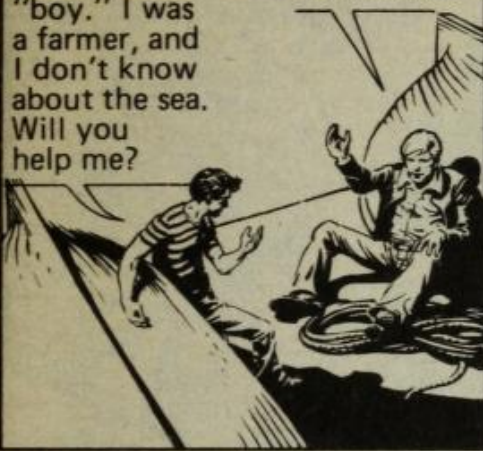


Billy was one of the first sailors picked. The "boys," on the other hand, were chosen last. These were the men who had never been to sea before.

Billy Budd

I'm the new "boy." I was a farmer, and I don't know about the sea. Will you help me?

Of course.

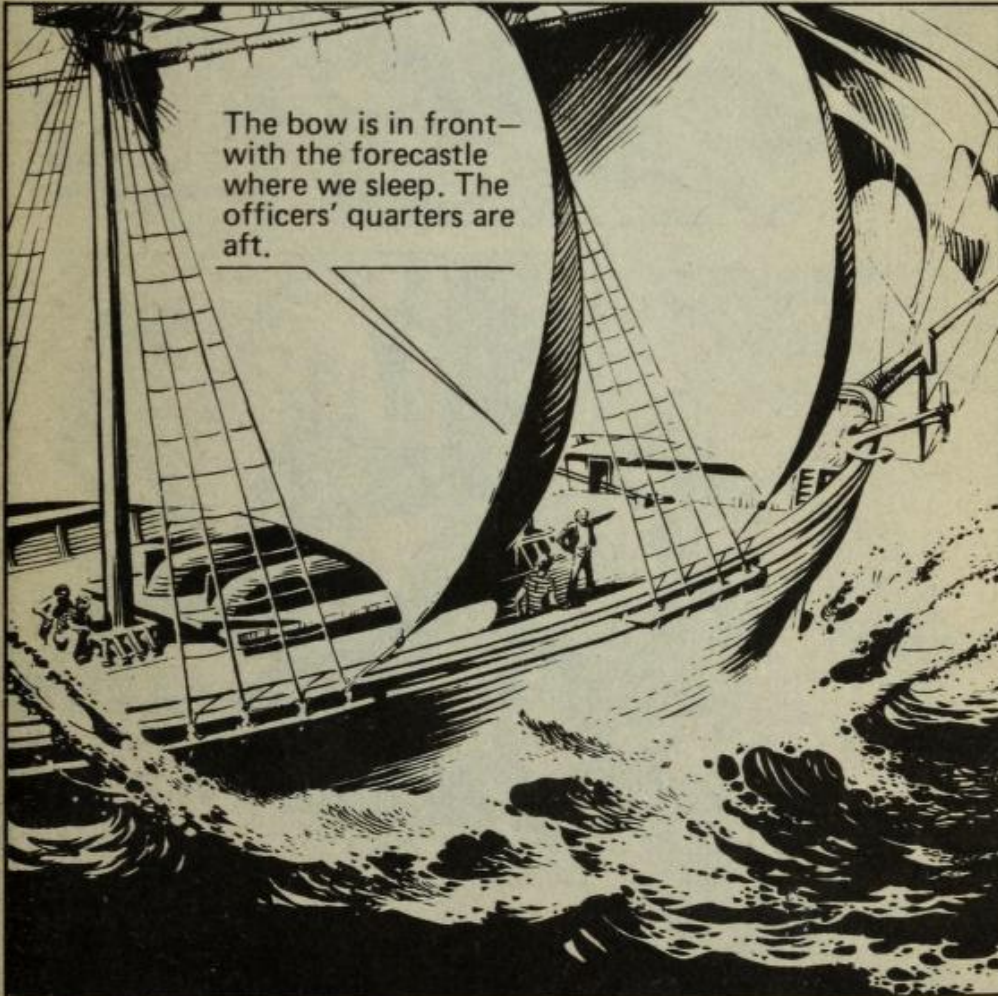


But I can't read or write.

Most sailors can't. I can't either. But you'll learn fast.



The bow is in front—with the forecastle where we sleep. The officers' quarters are aft.



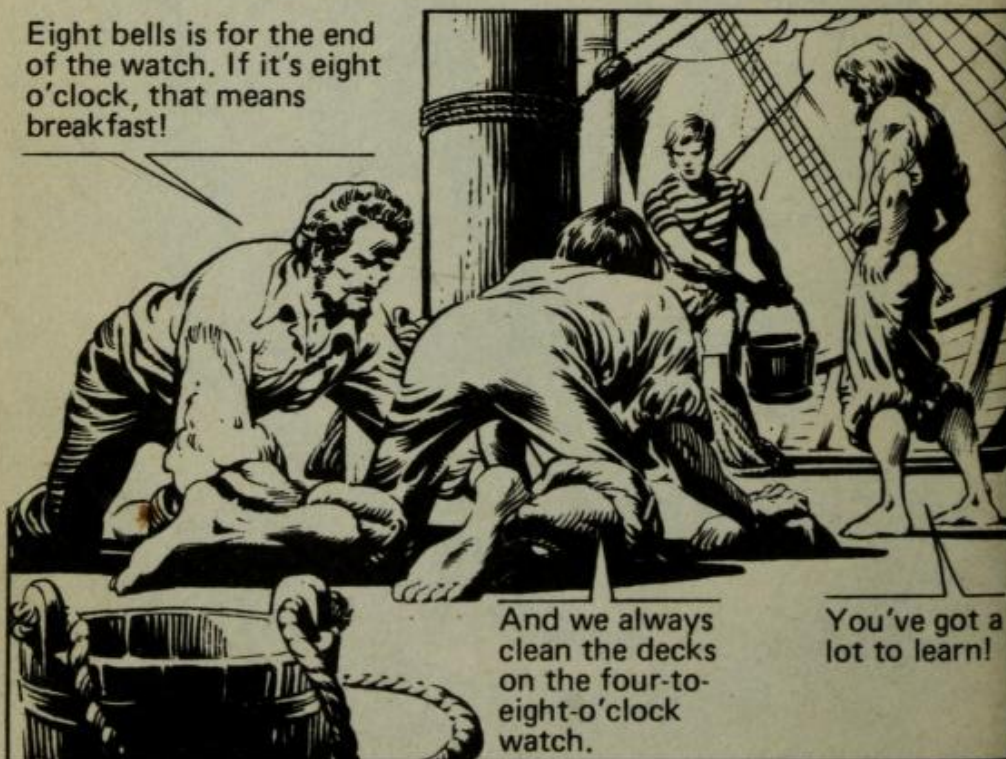
POCKET CLASSICS



What are the ship's bells?

We're on duty four hours, then off four hours. The bells ring one for a half-hour, two for one hour, and so on.

Eight bells is for the end of the watch. If it's eight o'clock, that means breakfast!



And we always clean the decks on the four-to-eight-o'clock watch.

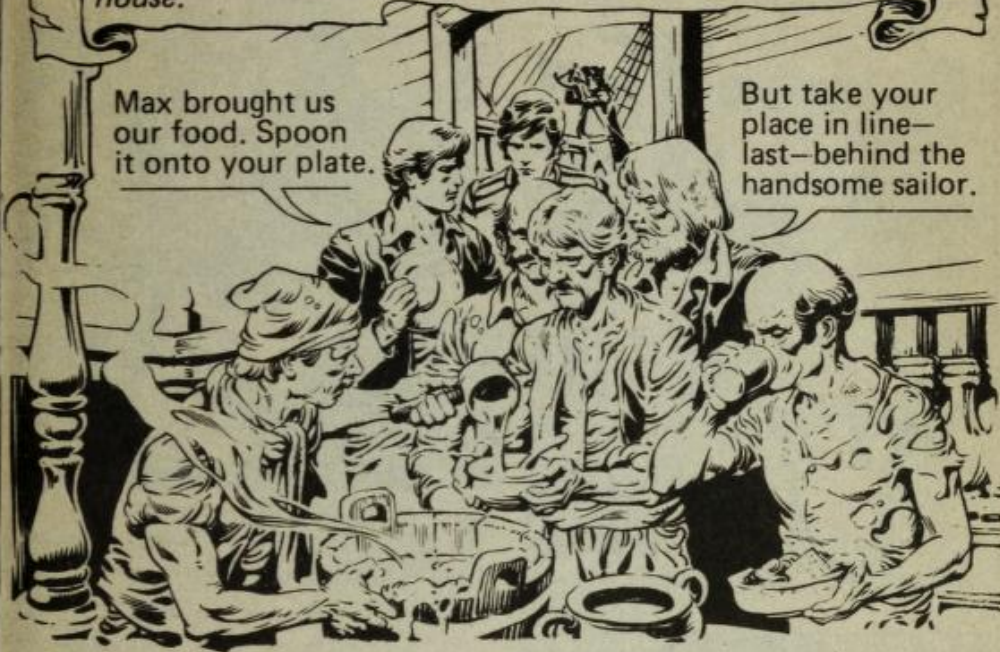
You've got a lot to learn!

Billy Budd

Eight bells rang out. The men rushed down to the fore-castle for their tin cups, and got coffee from the cook-house.

Max brought us our food. Spoon it onto your plate.

But take your place in line—last—behind the handsome sailor.



Soon we'll have the same thing for breakfast that we do for dinner and supper.

Right. Salt beef and hardtack — with beetles and worms!

If the biscuit's too hard for your teeth, crack it on your partner's head!



POCKET CLASSICS

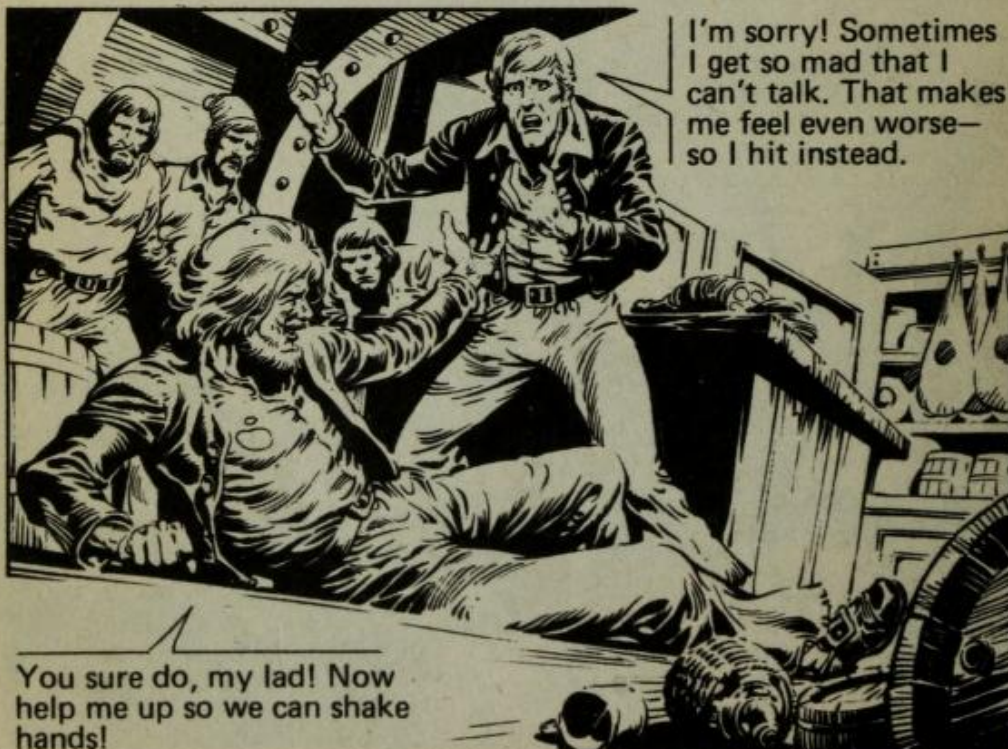
Red Whiskers, one of the older sailors, hadn't liked Billy at first. But Billy kept smiling. Then one day Red Whiskers went too far.



He gave Billy a poke in the ribs.



Billy tried to answer and couldn't. Instead, he knocked Red Whiskers down.



You sure do, my lad! Now help me up so we can shake hands!

Billy Budd

Later Billy and Henry worked on the sails.

The mainmast is in the center. The foremast is toward the bow. The mizzenmast is aft.

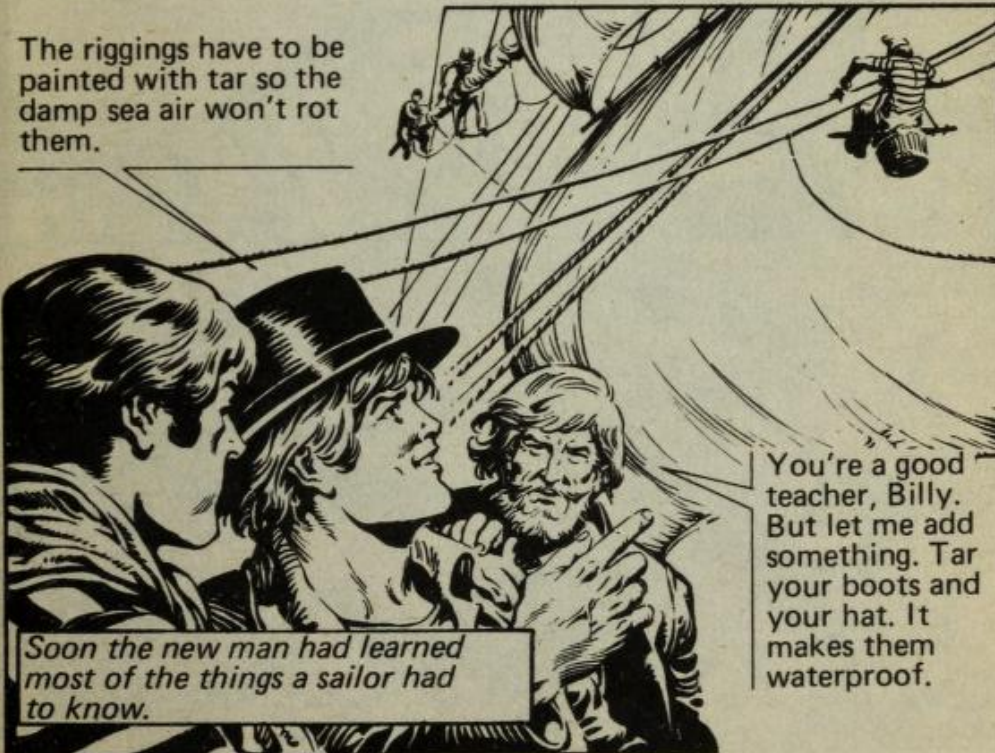


Right. We're climbing down the shrouds now.

All of the sails have names. And so do all the riggings—down to the smallest rope.



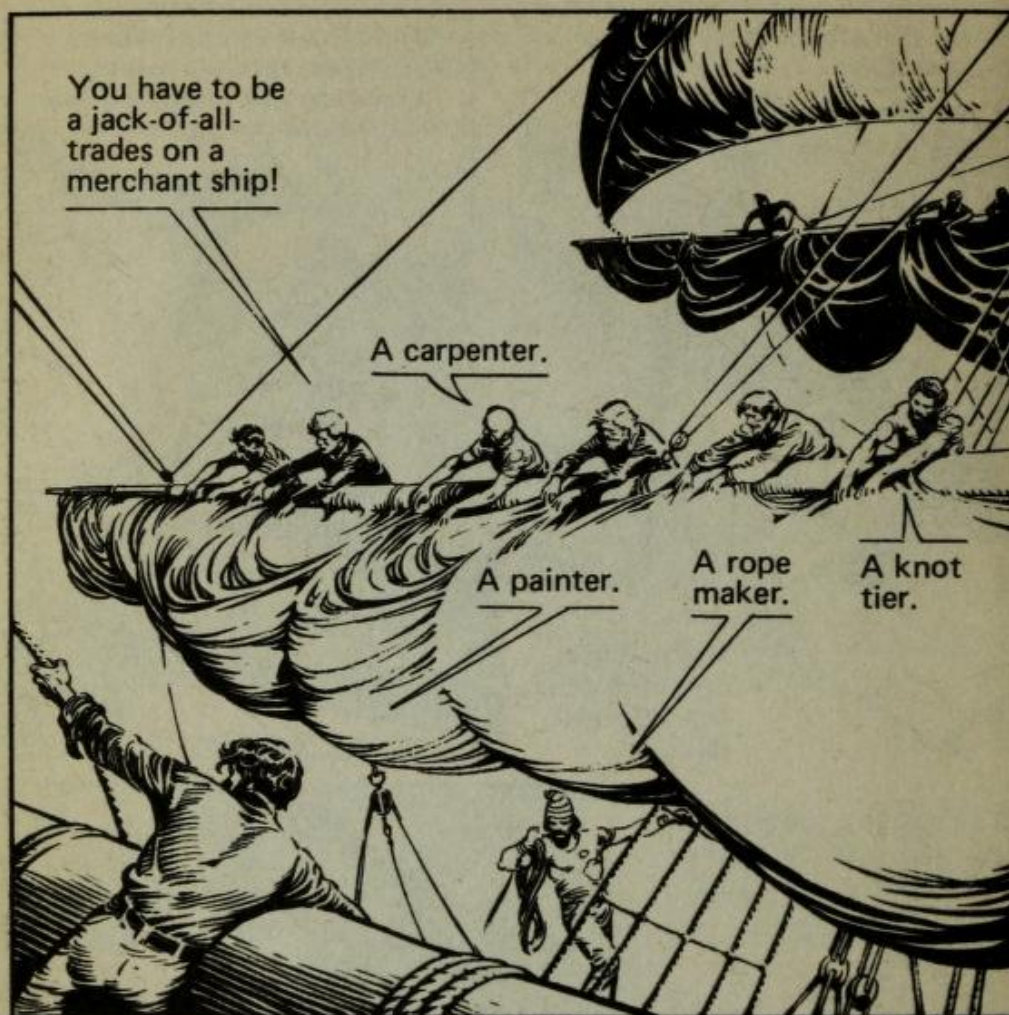
The riggings have to be painted with tar so the damp sea air won't rot them.



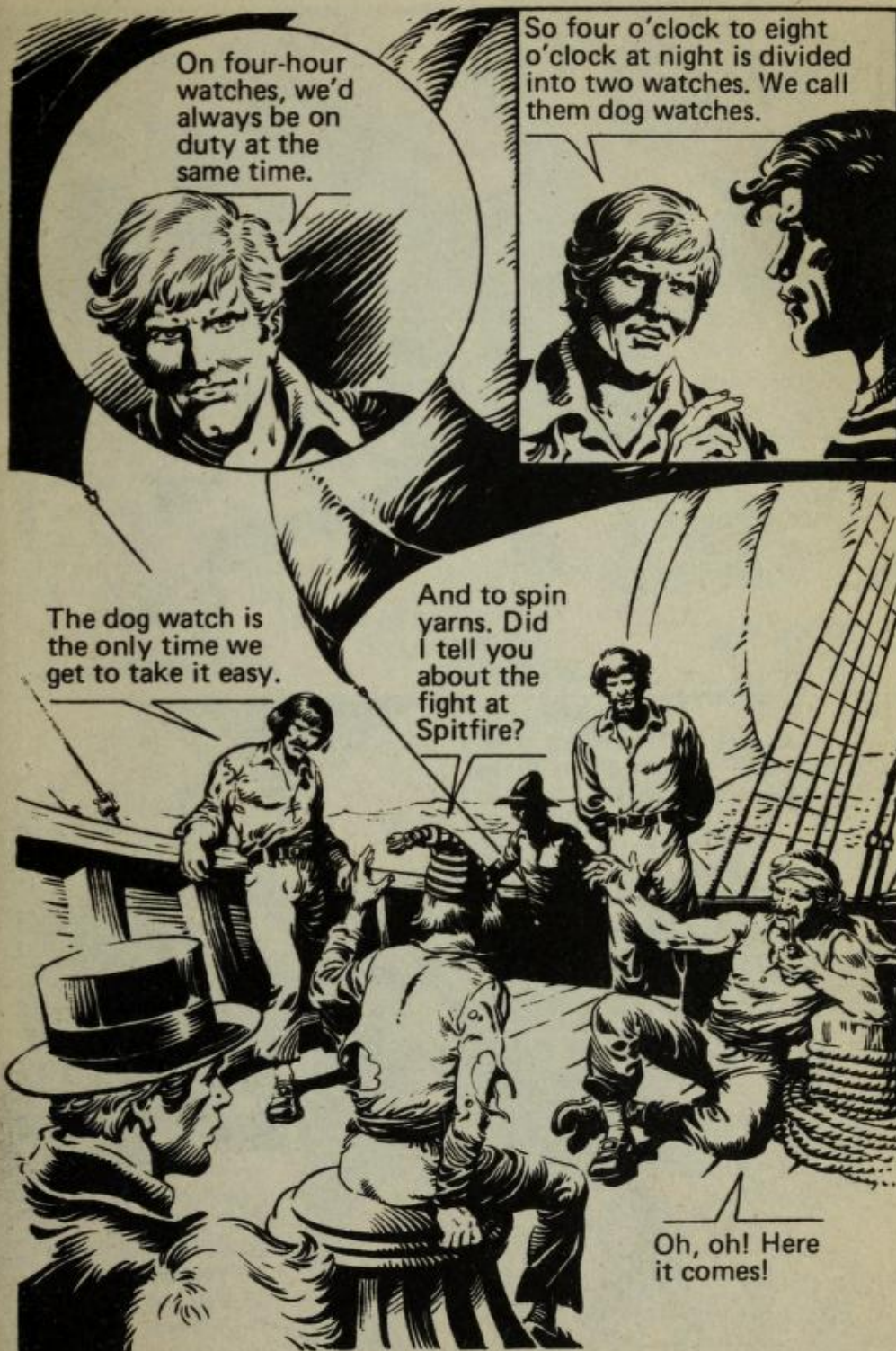
Soon the new man had learned most of the things a sailor had to know.

You're a good teacher, Billy. But let me add something. Tar your boots and your hat. It makes them waterproof.

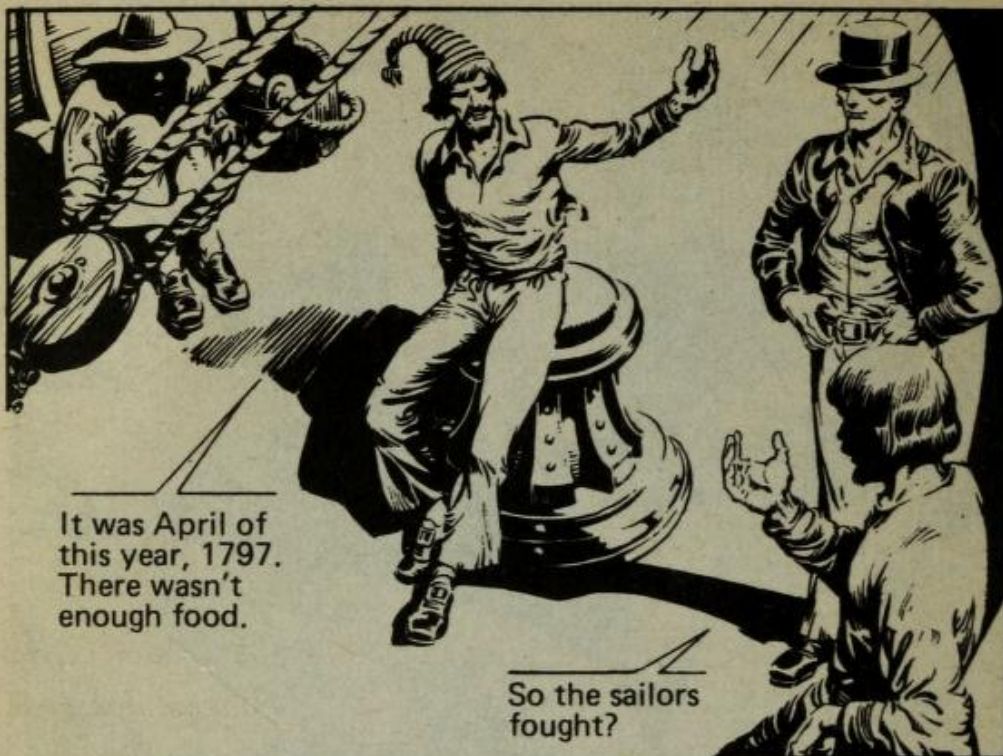
POCKET CLASSICS



Billy Budd

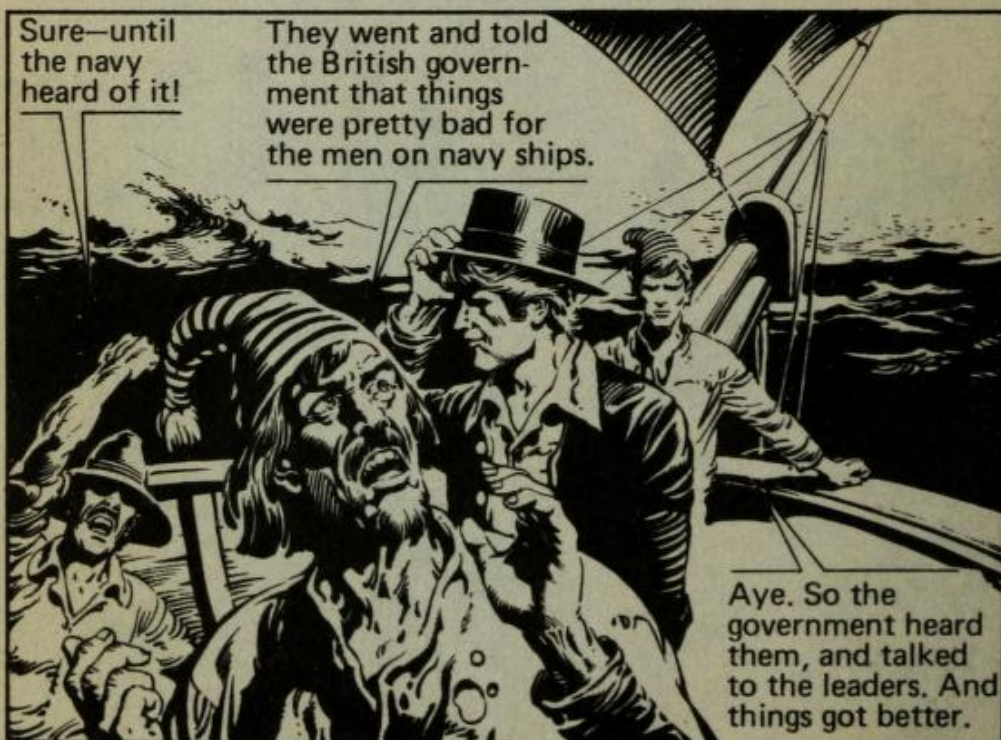


POCKET CLASSICS



It was April of
this year, 1797.
There wasn't
enough food.

So the sailors
fought?

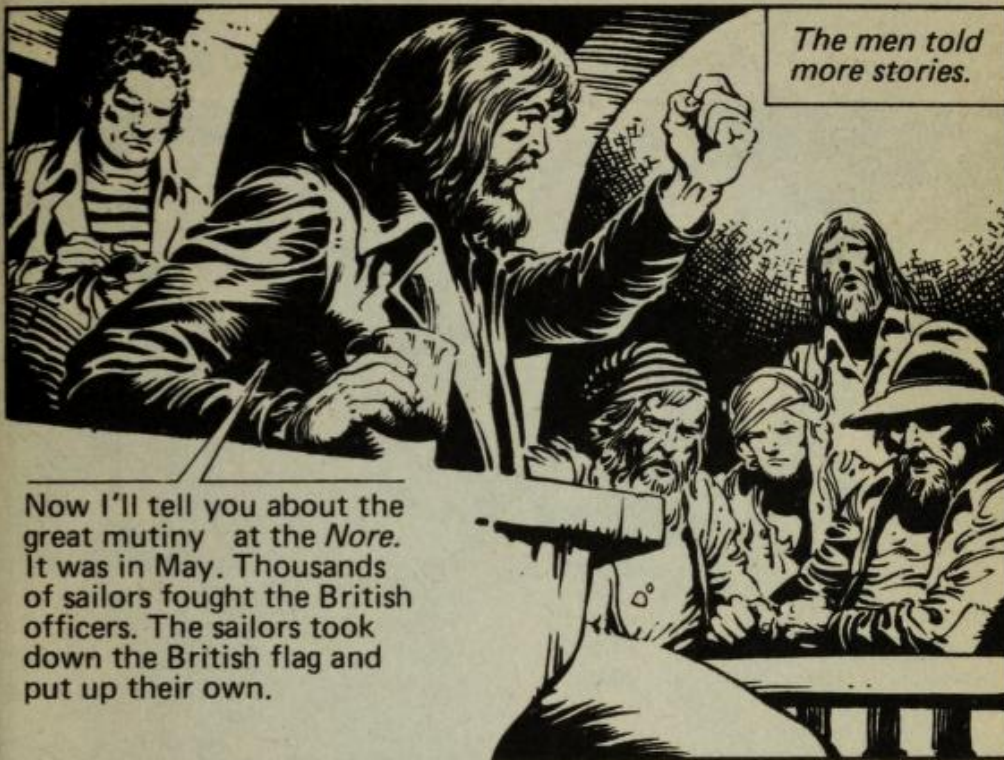


Sure—until
the navy
heard of it!

They went and told
the British govern-
ment that things
were pretty bad for
the men on navy ships.

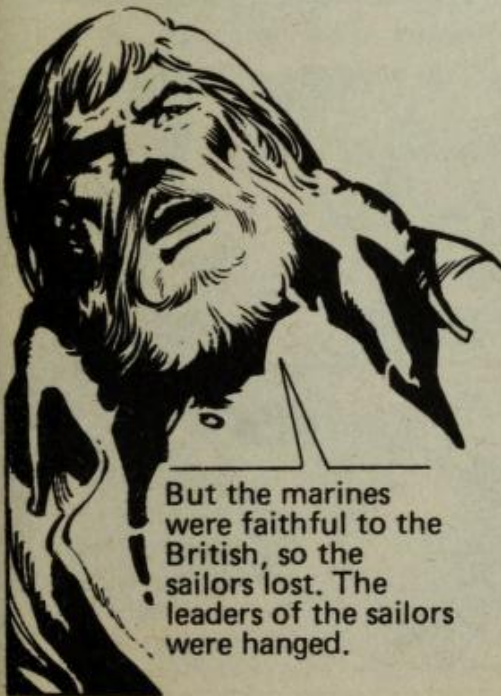
Aye. So the
government heard
them, and talked
to the leaders. And
things got better.

Billy Budd



*The men told
more stories.*

Now I'll tell you about the great mutiny at the *Nore*. It was in May. Thousands of sailors fought the British officers. The sailors took down the British flag and put up their own.



But the marines were faithful to the British, so the sailors lost. The leaders of the sailors were hanged.



A sailor's life is still hard. And every captain watches his crew very closely.

POCKET CLASSICS

Billy was lucky to sail on the Rights Of Man. Captain Graveling was a fair man, and the crew liked him. The crew also liked Billy.

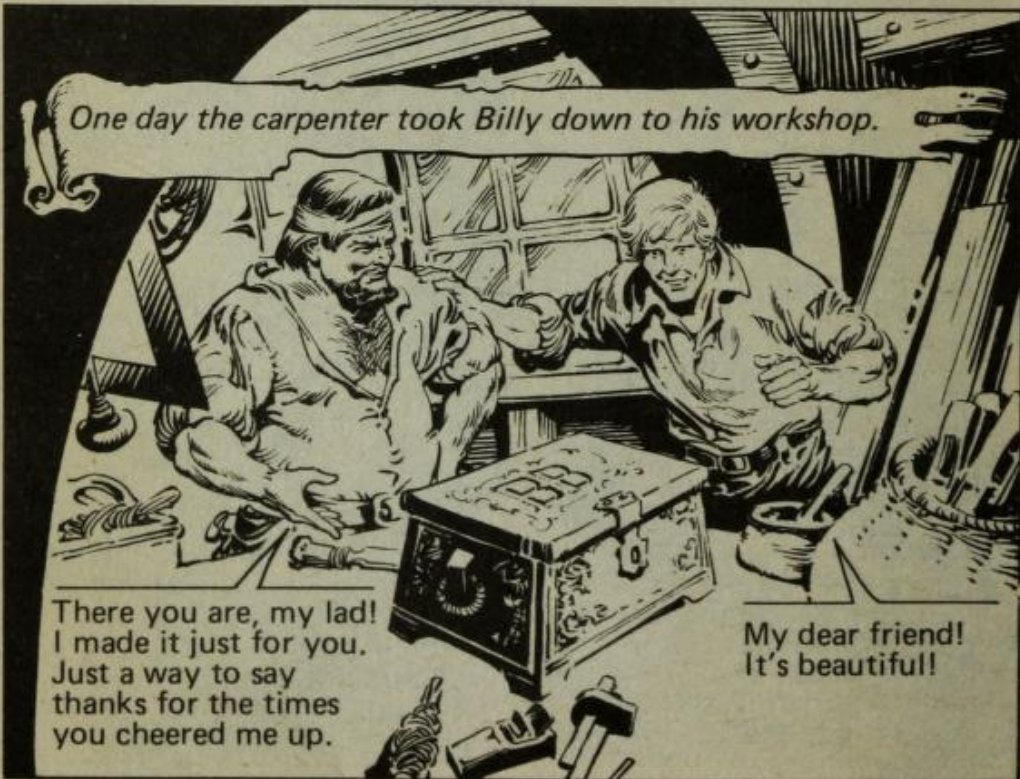


There you are, handsome Billy. I sewed your jacket for you! It's as good as new.

Thank you!



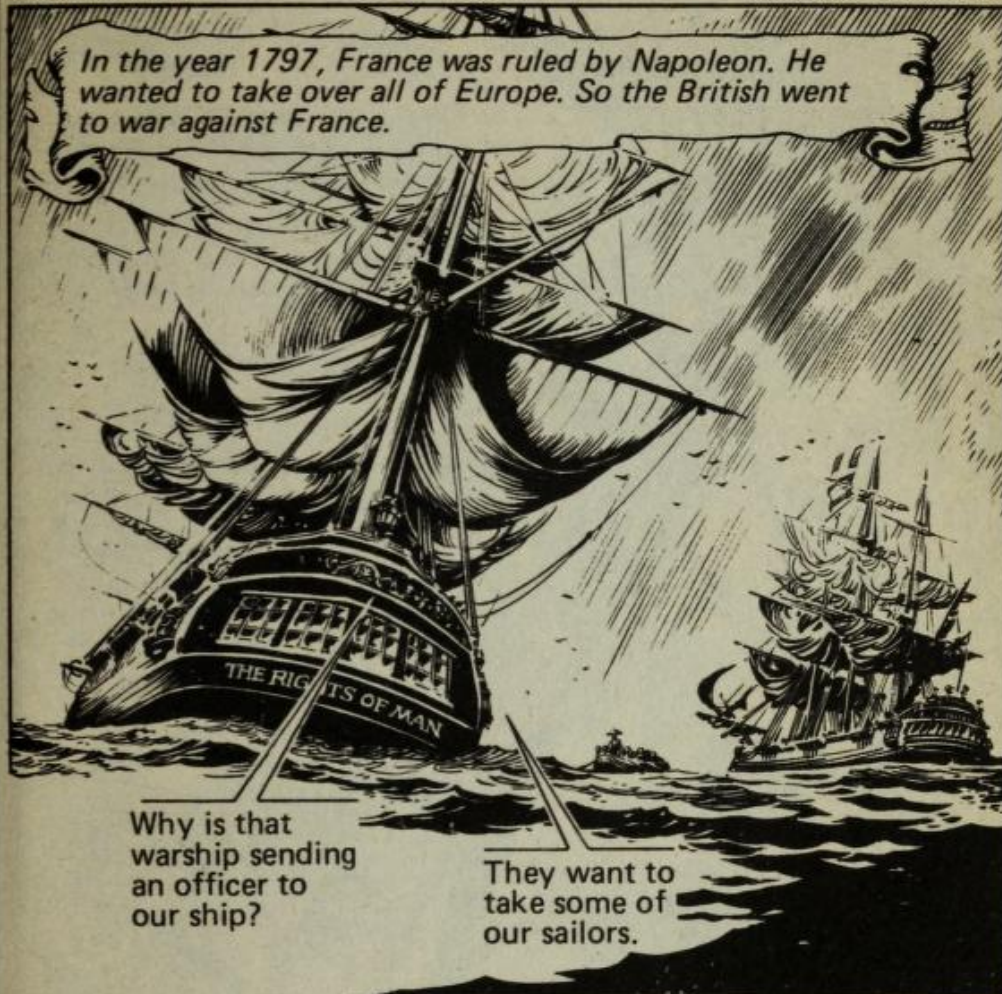
You're the best in the sky ropes, but I'm better with a needle.



One day the carpenter took Billy down to his workshop.

There you are, my lad! I made it just for you. Just a way to say thanks for the times you cheered me up.

My dear friend! It's beautiful!



POCKET CLASSICS



The men came down to see what was going to happen.

Not many men join the navy for the food! Some are forced to join.

But if they love the sea. . . .

Some of them do, and some of them don't. Some have just run away from the police.

And some were put on board when they were too drunk to know it.

Or given knock-out drops and dragged aboard.

Billy Budd

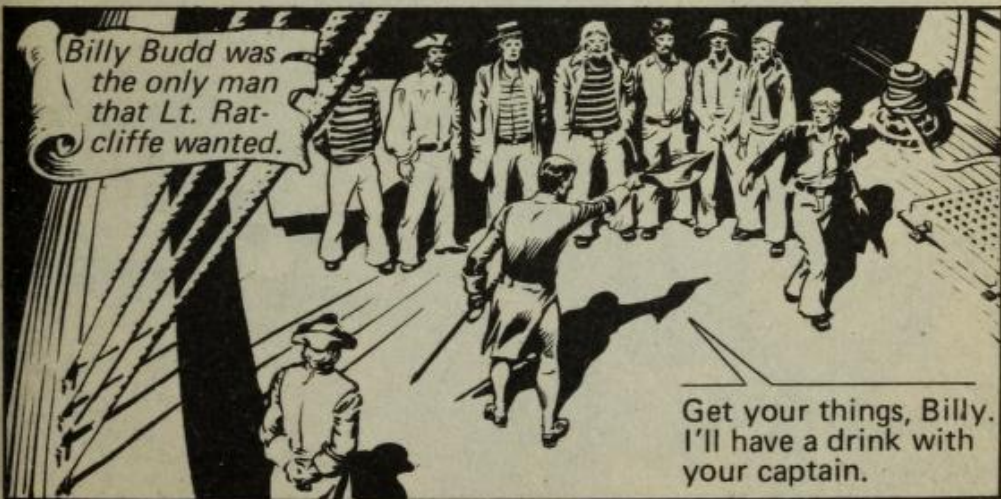


Your name and age, lad.

Billy Budd, sir. Age twenty-one.



I'll take Billy. Now, Captain Graveling, kindly show me the rest of your crew.



Get your things, Billy. I'll have a drink with your captain.

POCKET CLASSICS



Sir, you are taking
my best man.

Yes, I know.
I'm sorry.



Before I had Billy, my men
were always fighting.

He is like a big, friendly St.
Bernard dog. Everybody
loves him.



King George III will be
happy to learn he is
getting such a good
man for his navy.

Billy Budd

It's no joke, sir.
You're taking
my peacemaker.

Sorry. We
need him.

Billy, you cannot take that
big box on board a warship.
Put your things in a bag.



Billy, we'll miss you.
Aren't you sorry to
leave?

Aye. But it's like a
change in the weather.
What can you do but
face it with a smile?



POCKET CLASSICS



Billy Budd

Once on board the Indomitable, Billy was quickly taken to an officer.

William Budd, where is your place of birth?

I don't know, sir.



Who was your father?

I don't know, sir.



Do you know anything about your beginnings?

No, sir. But I've heard that I was found in a basket at someone's house in Bristol.



Although he could not answer the officer's questions, the men could see that he was healthy and would make a good sailor. So Billy was rated as an able seaman.

POCKET CLASSICS

The Indomitable was a seventy-four, meaning that the warship carried seventy-four cannons.



I've never seen so many men in my life! How many are on board?

I don't know for sure. Maybe 500. Plus the marines and other soldiers.



It's like a country of its own, with the captain as king. We're all divided into small groups.



We each have certain jobs to do, and every minute is planned for us.

Billy Budd



POCKET CLASSICS



Breakfast is at eight o'clock. Dinner is at twelve. Supper is at four. And no more eating for sixteen hours!



Eight bells. Danny's gone to get our food. So pull up a shot box.



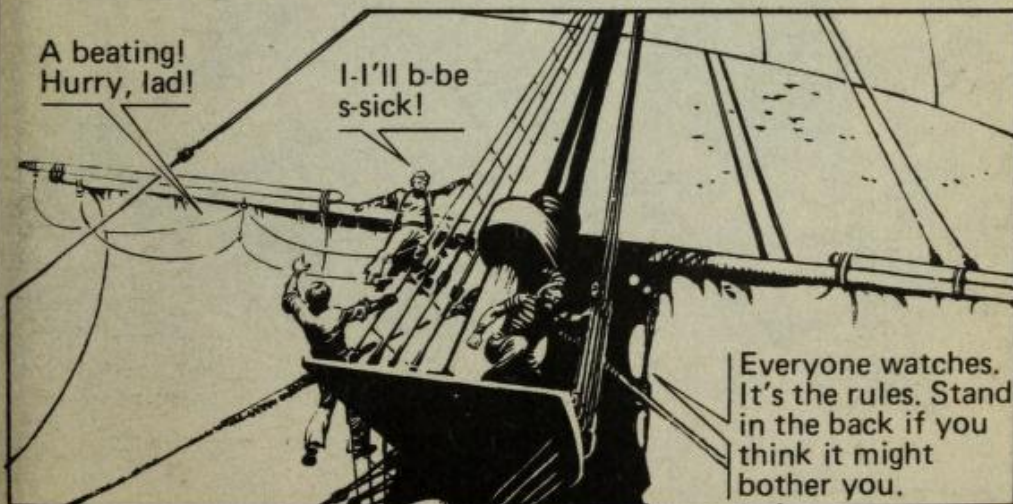
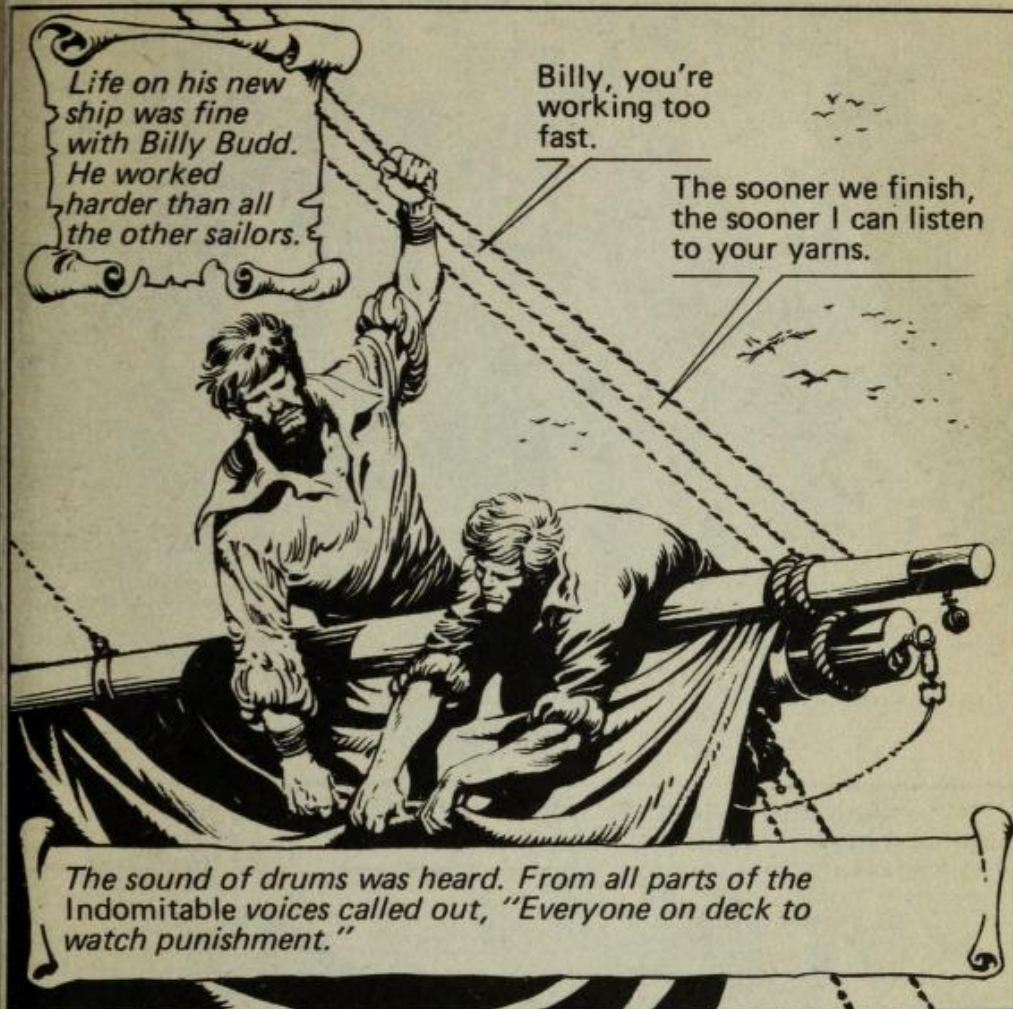
Danny, are you sure the cook didn't cheat us?

Salt beef, hard tack, and rum. All here.

I'm used to that.

Billy felt at home right away.

Billy Budd

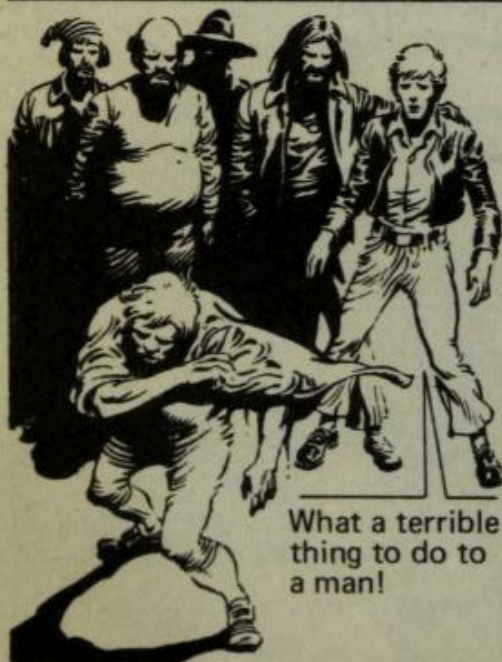


POCKET CLASSICS



Prisoner, you have broken the rules. You are to get twelve lashes. Take off your shirt.

The first lash drew blood. By the twelfth lash, the prisoner's back was cut to pieces.



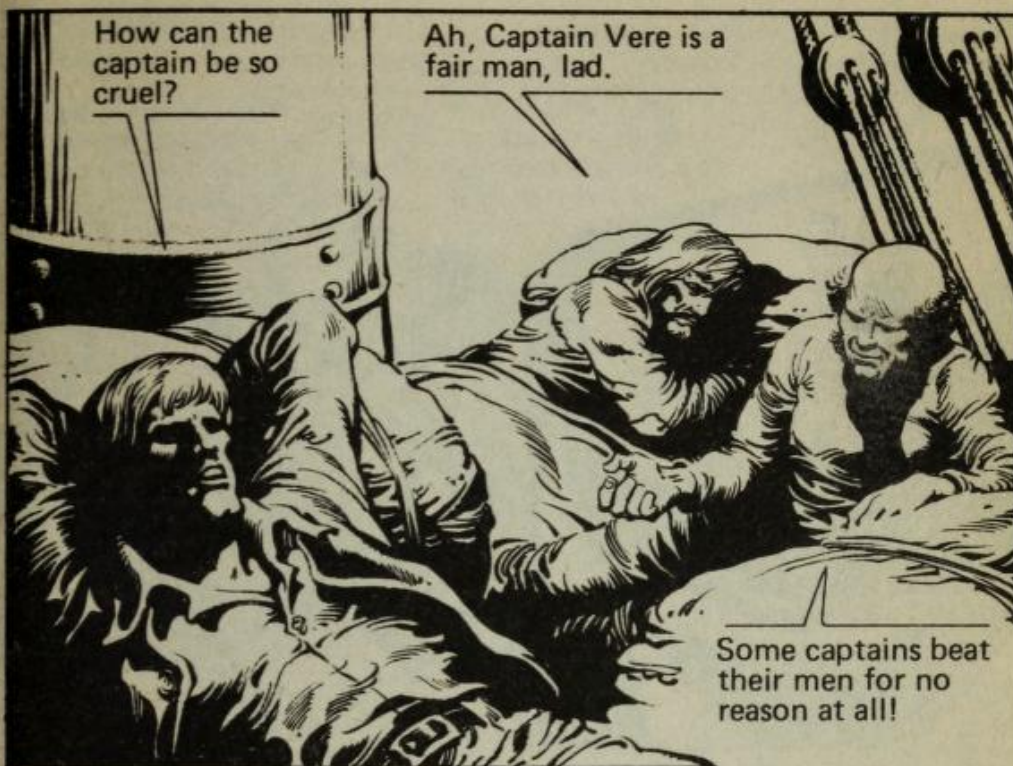
What a terrible thing to do to a man!



Easy, lad. On *this* ship, if you break one rule, you get the lash. You'll get used to it.

Never!

Billy Budd



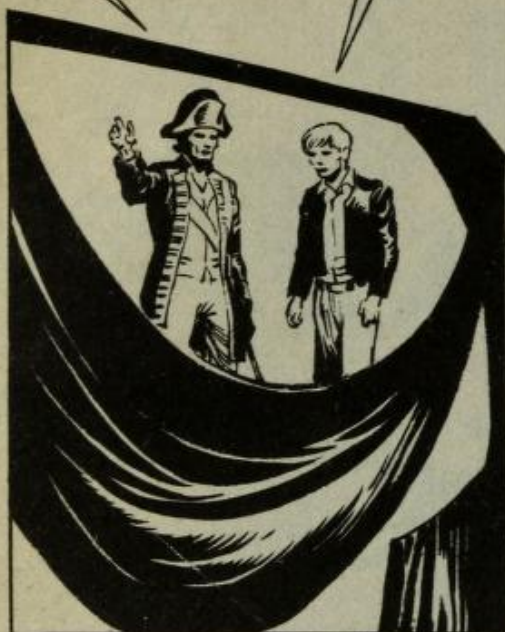
POCKET CLASSICS

Sailor, be more careful.

But what have I done?

The corporal keeps finding things wrong with me!

Well, sew yourself up in your bag, and keep your eyes open.



Billy looked to an old sailor called the Dansker for help.

Billy, Jemmy Legs is out to get you. His name is Claggart, the master-at-arms. Watch out for him!

But he always has a good word for me when I pass him.



Billy Budd

Soon it was mealtime.

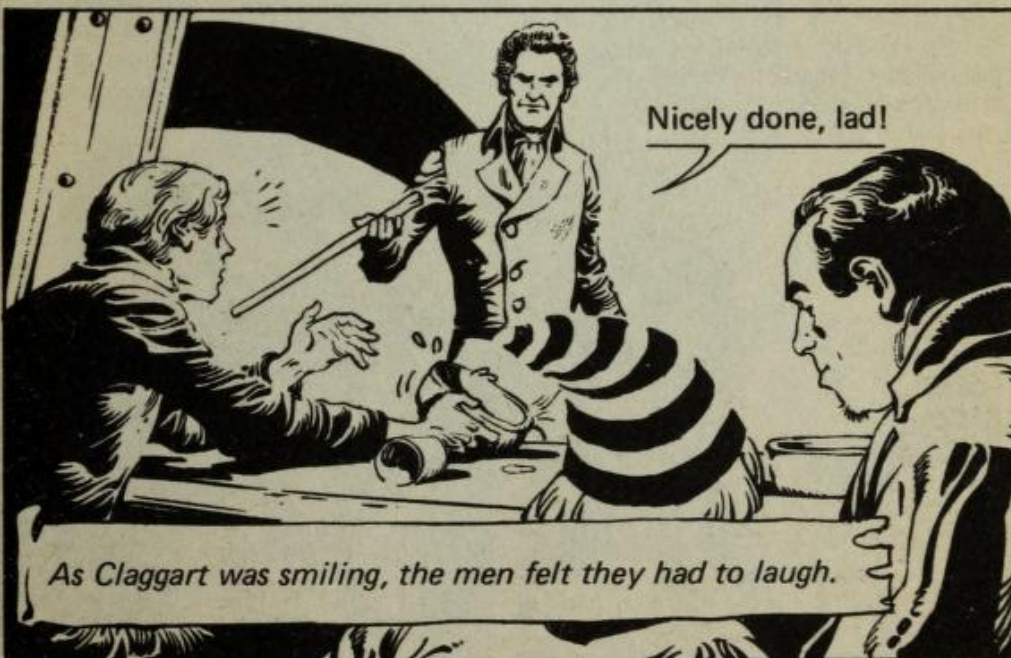
What do you know of John Claggart, the master-at-arms?

Little except for what I've heard about him. You can be sure that he never sailed before this trip.

Aye. He may be in charge now, but I bet the police were chasing him on land.



The ship moved suddenly. Billy's soup spilled out on the deck just as Claggart was passing.



As Claggart was smiling, the men felt they had to laugh.

POCKET CLASSICS

The master-at-arms continued on his way, talking to himself.



I think Billy *threw* that soup.

So Claggart struck out at a boy coming from the other direction.

Why does old
Jemmy Legs
hate Billy Budd?



Because Billy
is both good-
looking and
nice. When
he wants
something
on Billy, I
have to make
it up.

That's not fair
to Billy.



Maybe not.
But I take
orders from
Claggart.
And so
do you!

Billy Budd

Just after dinner, the beating of drums was heard throughout the Indomitable.



Hurry! Do you know which is your cannon?

Aye. Number five.



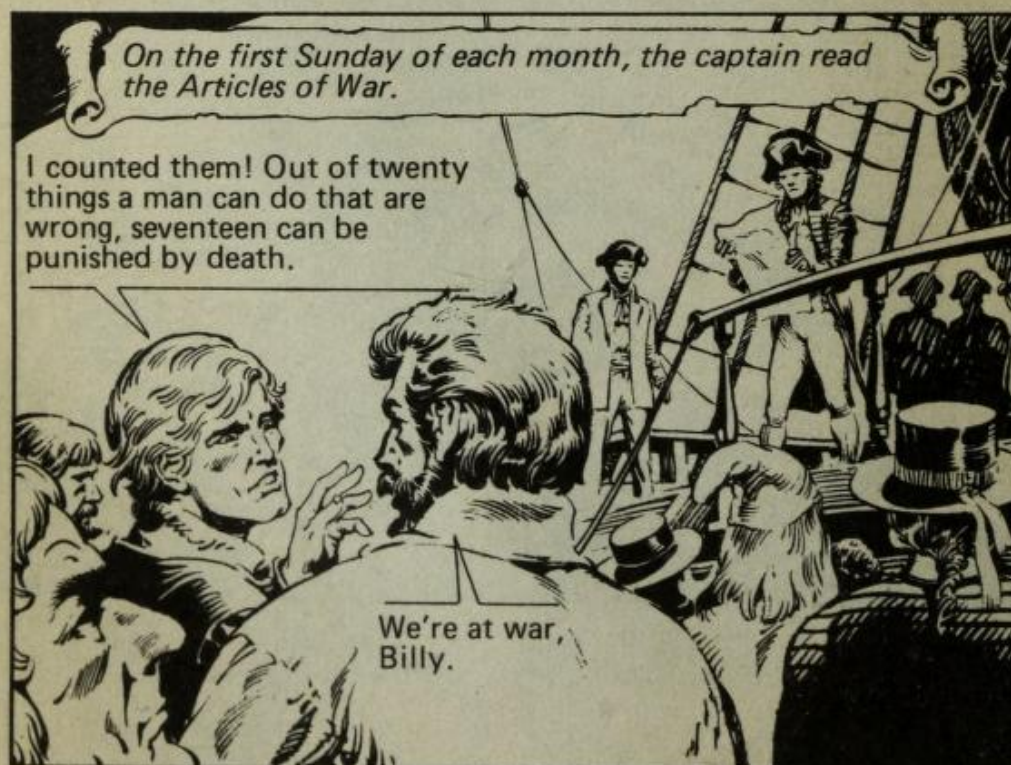
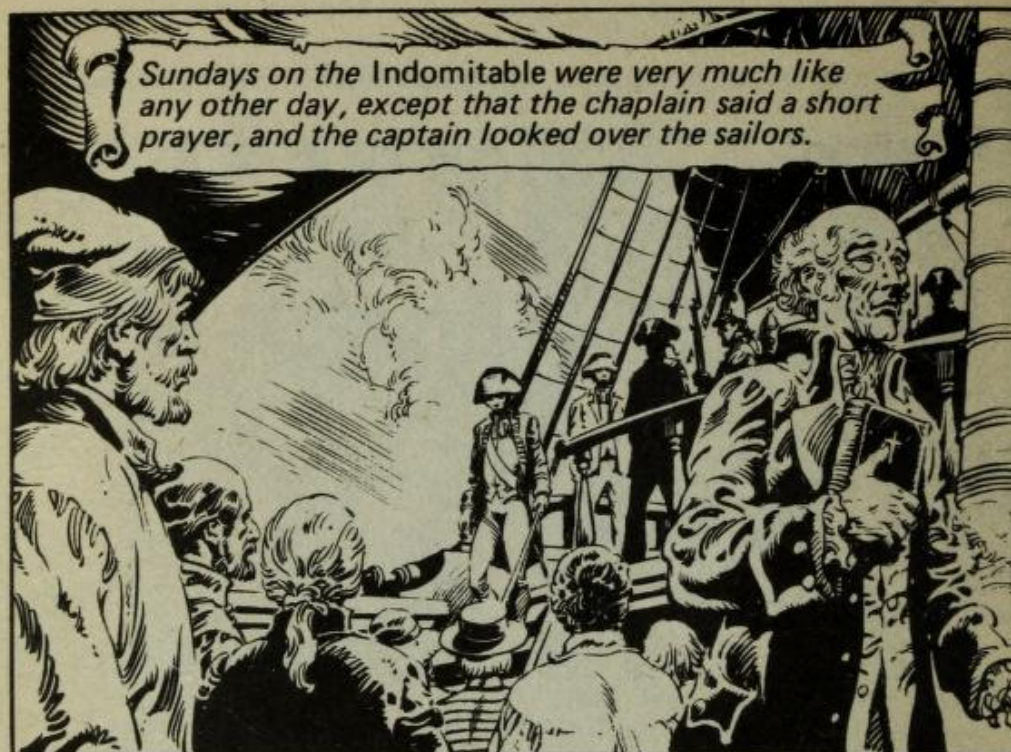
What is it?

A practice battle, but you must still hurry!

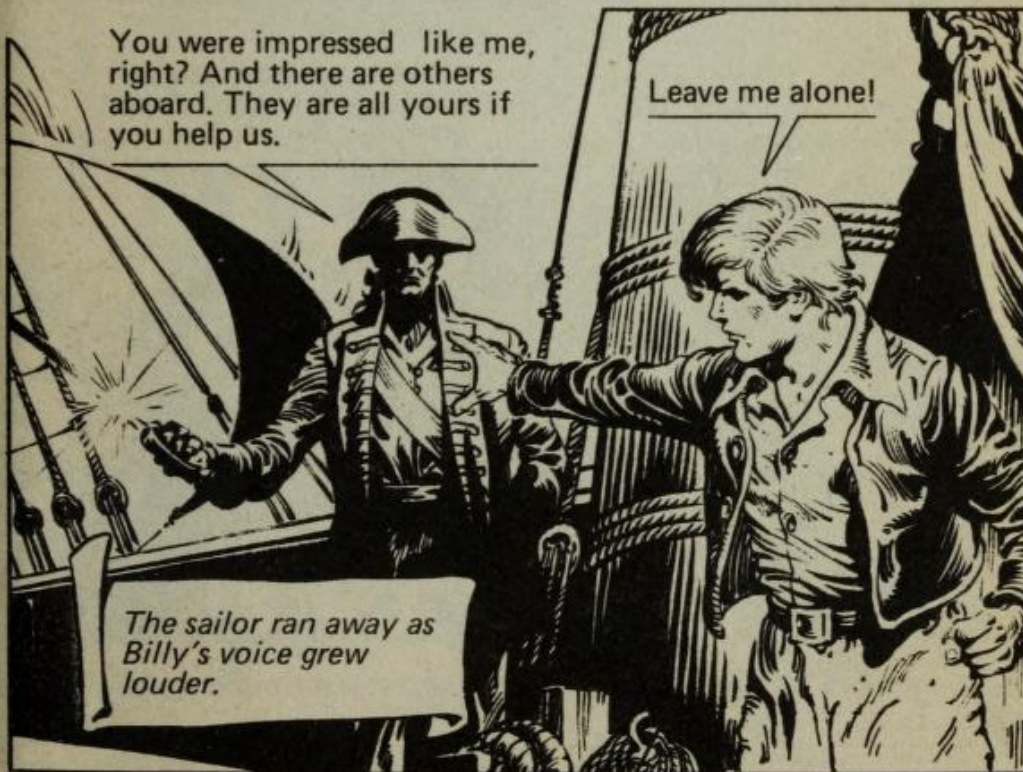
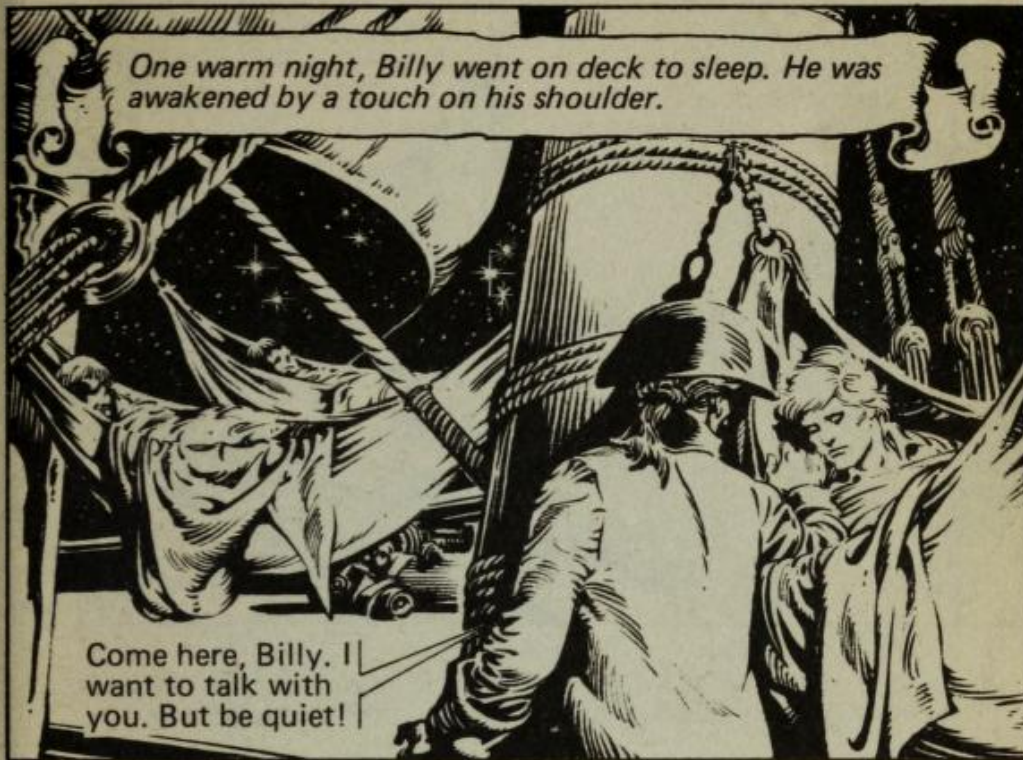


Billy found that pulling the cannons was the hardest work of all.

POCKET CLASSICS



Billy Budd



POCKET CLASSICS



The other sailor went back to sleep, but Billy didn't know what to think. He had never been asked to do anything wrong before.

The next day, Billy saw the guard on the gun deck. He gave Billy a friendly nod.

A few days later, the guard gave Billy another cheerful greeting. Billy did not answer.



Billy never thought of reporting the guard as a troublemaker.

Billy Budd

But Billy again asked the old Dansker for help.

Didn't I tell you,
Billy Budd? Old
Jemmy legs is
out to get you.

What does
Claggart
have to do
with the
guard?

Claggart sent him
to you, lad. To
catch you doing
something wrong.

I can't be-
lieve that.

*Because Billy was so good, he did not know about
the evil looks Claggart gave him.*

POCKET CLASSICS

The Indomitable had been sent on special duty. It was far from the other British ships. One day Claggart asked for a meeting with Captain Vere.

Well? What is it, master-at-arms?

I have reason to believe there is a sailor making trouble with the impressed men.

A bad man aboard? Name him.

William Budd.

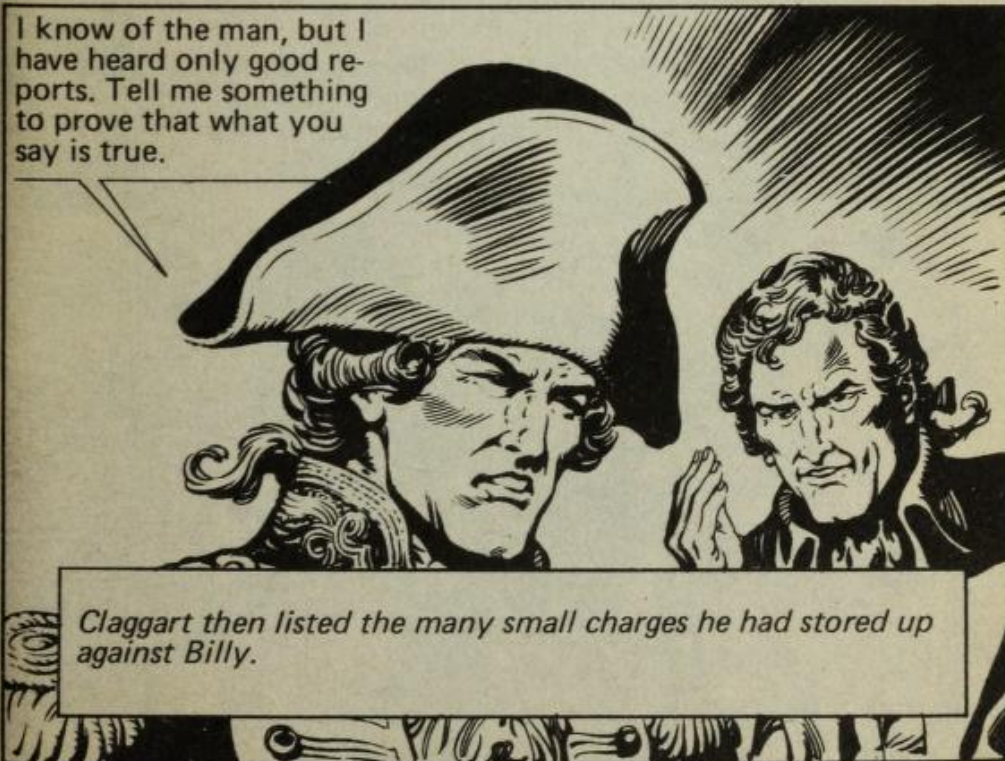
Billy Budd

Billy, the handsome sailor?
The young fellow so well
liked by the others?

The same. He's not as
nice as he looks!



I know of the man, but I
have heard only good re-
ports. Tell me something
to prove that what you
say is true.



*Claggart then listed the many small charges he had stored up
against Billy.*

POCKET CLASSICS

Captain Vere turned to a midshipman.

Send Albert, my cabin boy, to me.



Do you know Billy Budd?

Yes, sir.



Find him and bring him to my cabin. Don't let him talk to anyone else!



Master-at-arms, quietly follow the sailor into my cabin.



Billy Budd

The captain was a good judge of men. He did not trust Claggart. He felt that when the master-at-arms faced Billy, he would be able to learn the truth.



Shut the door.
Let no one in.



Now, master-at-arms, tell this man face-to-face what you have told me.

Claggart stood directly in front of Billy. He repeated what he had told the captain. Billy could not believe what he was hearing.

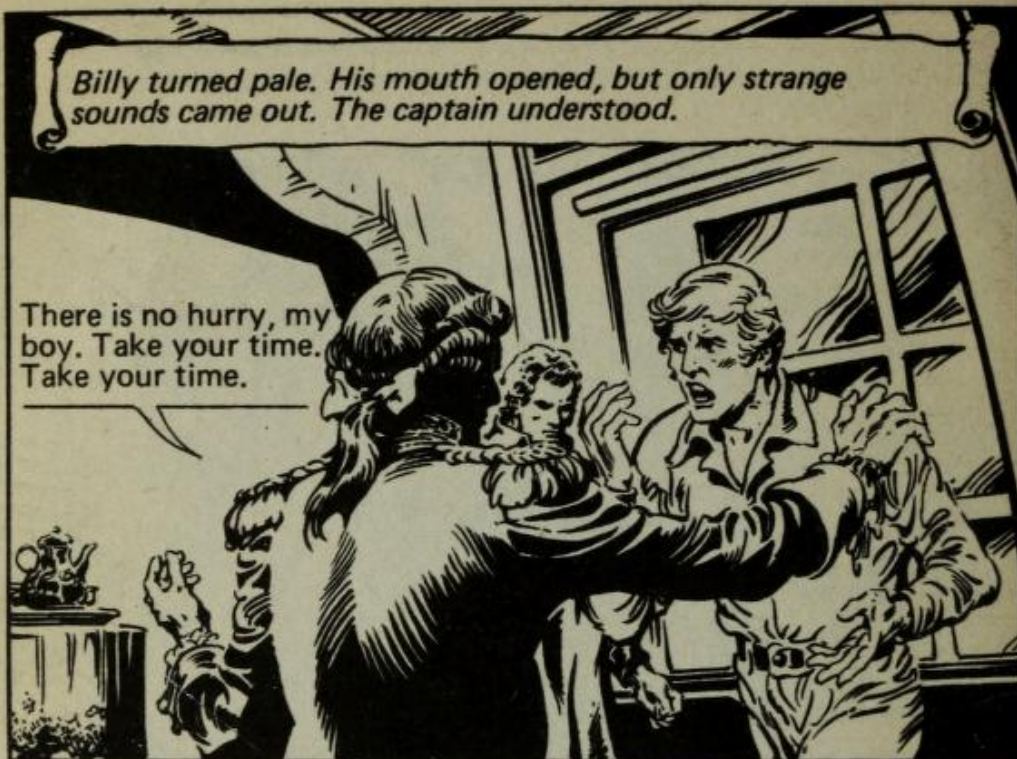


Speak, man!
Speak! Say
that it isn't
true!

POCKET CLASSICS

Billy turned pale. His mouth opened, but only strange sounds came out. The captain understood.

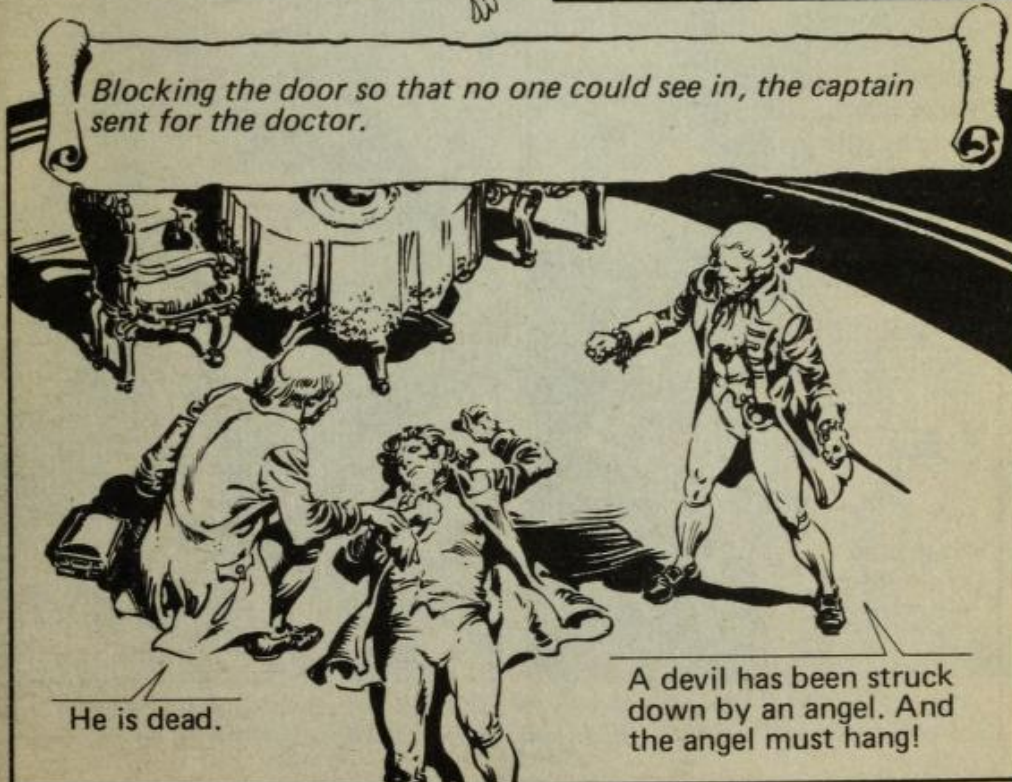
There is no hurry, my boy. Take your time. Take your time.



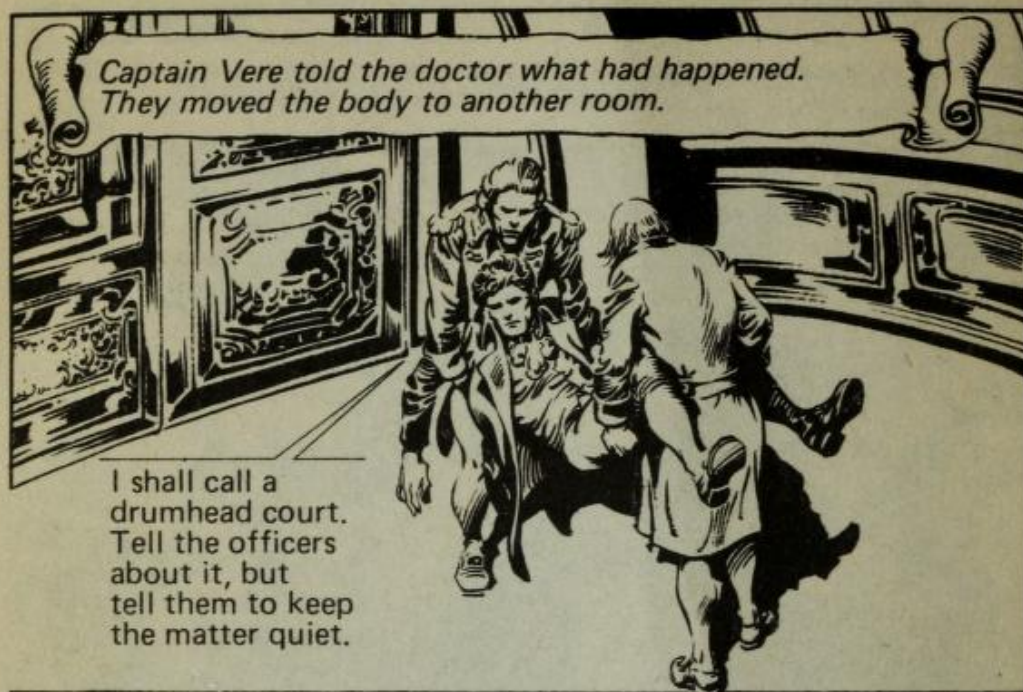
The harder Billy tried to speak, the more trouble he had. Suddenly his right arm shot out and Claggart dropped to the deck.

What have you done?





POCKET CLASSICS



But the officers did not like this news.

The captain of the marines was not happy either.

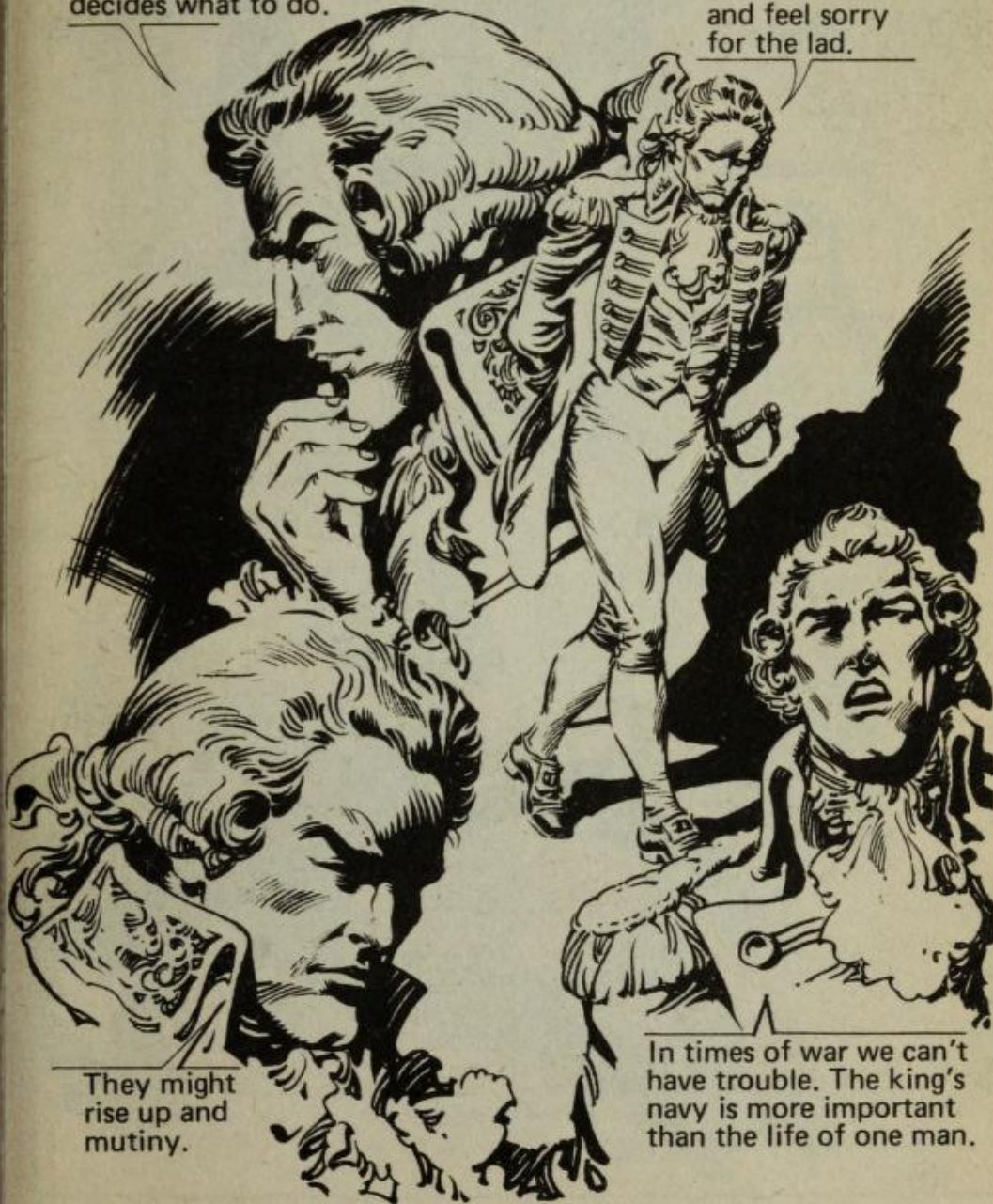


The officers knew that such a trial was correct during wartime. But they also knew that Billy had been provoked into killing Claggart.

The doctor wondered if the captain was all right. Indeed, Captain Vere was having a hard time making up his mind.

The lad could not help it.
But I can't keep him in
irons until the admiral
decides what to do.

The whole ship
would know—
and feel sorry
for the lad.



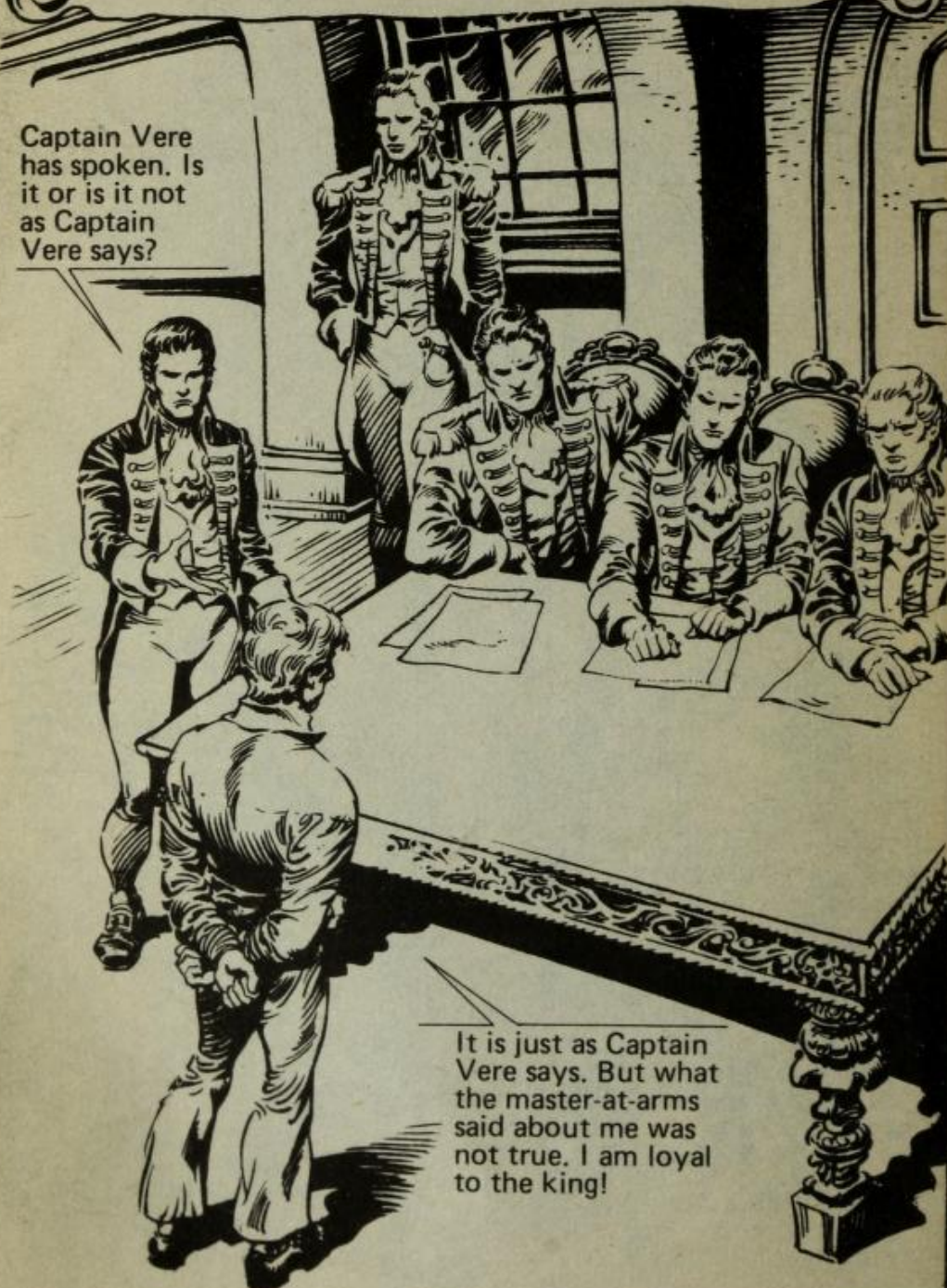
They might
rise up and
mutiny.

In times of war we can't
have trouble. The king's
navy is more important
than the life of one man.

POCKET CLASSICS

Several officers made up the drumhead court. Captain Vere told exactly what Claggart had said and what Billy had done.

Captain Vere has spoken. Is it or is it not as Captain Vere says?

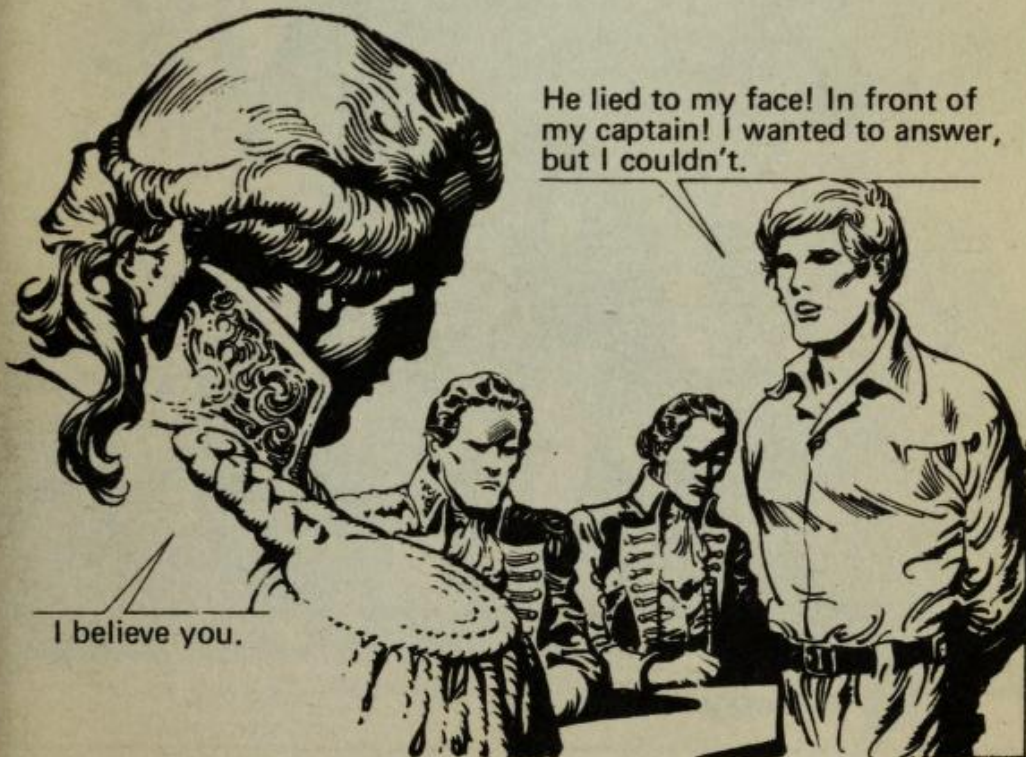


It is just as Captain Vere says. But what the master-at-arms said about me was not true. I am loyal to the king!



Was there bad feeling between you?

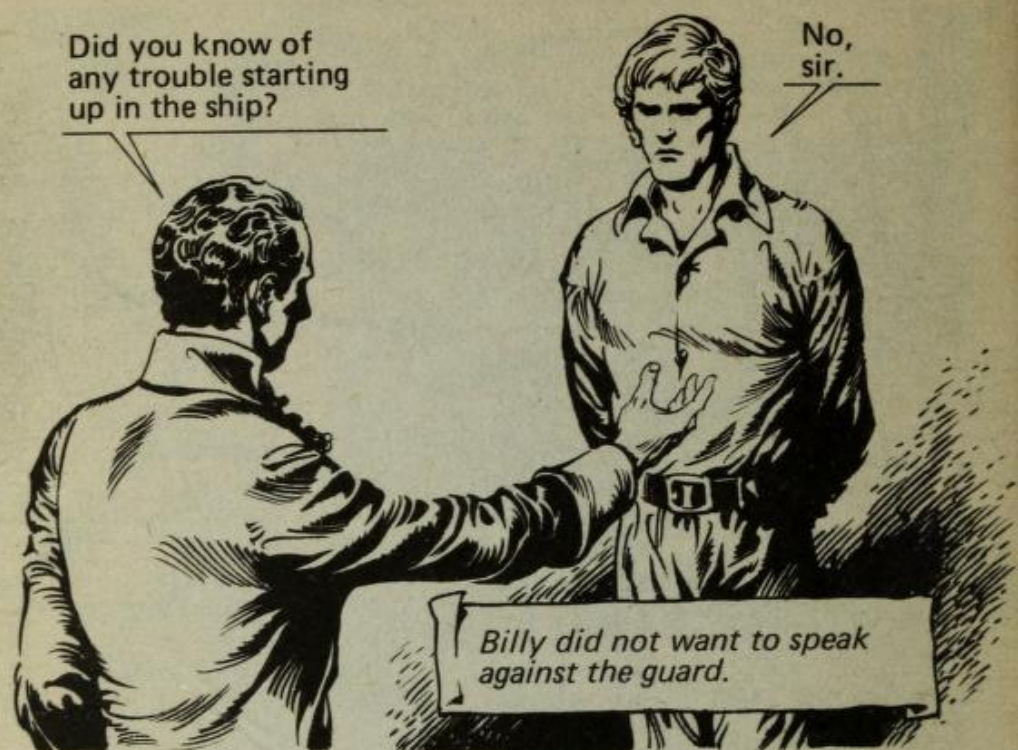
None. I am sorry he is dead. If I could have talked, I would not have hit him.



I believe you.

He lied to my face! In front of my captain! I wanted to answer, but I couldn't.

POCKET CLASSICS



Billy Budd

It is all so strange.

Aye. But we must deal with what Billy has done.



Budd, if you have anything more to say for yourself, say it now.

I have said it all, sir.



The guard was called. He took Billy back to another room and watched over him.

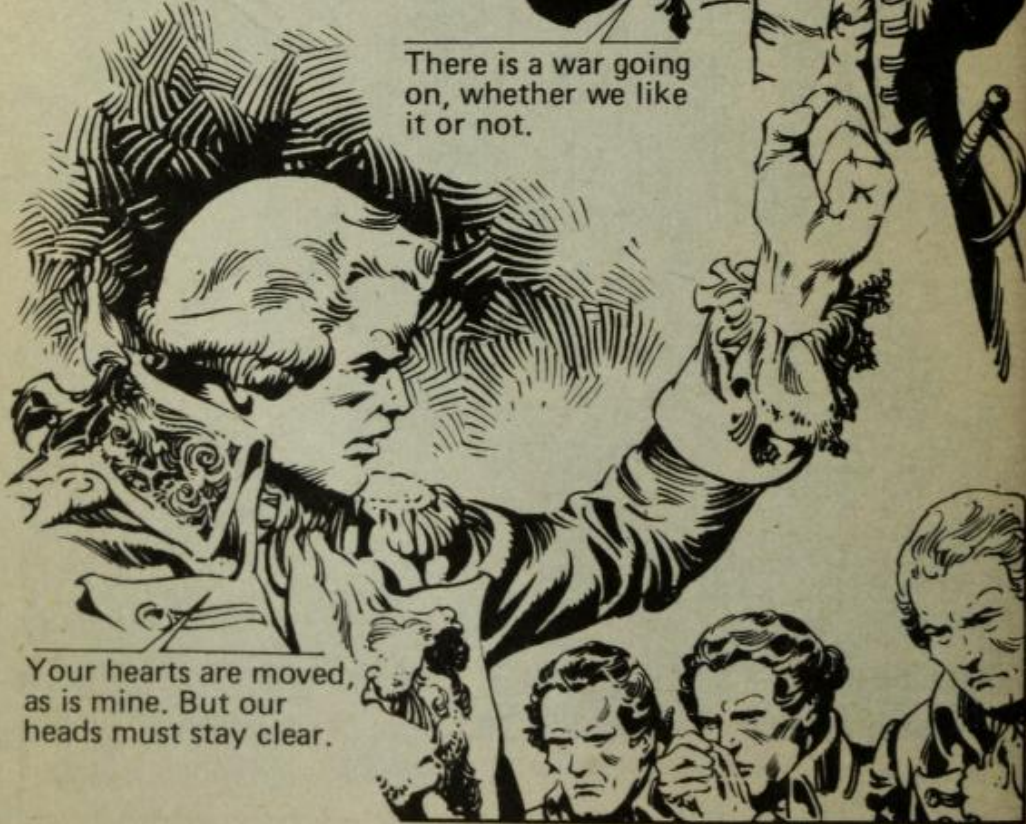
POCKET CLASSICS

Captain Vere stood with his back to the drumhead court. The three officers spoke together for a few minutes, and then they were silent. The captain turned.



I share your feelings for the prisoner. But as the king's officers, we are not free men.

There is a war going on, whether we like it or not.



Your hearts are moved, as is mine. But our heads must stay clear.

Billy Budd

We must follow
wartime law.

If a man strikes an
officer, and the
officer dies. . . .

Could we not
find him guilty—
but let him go?

No. The sailors
would wonder
why. They would
think we were
afraid of them.
They might mutiny.

*The court said that Billy was guilty. He was to be hanged during
the early morning watch.*

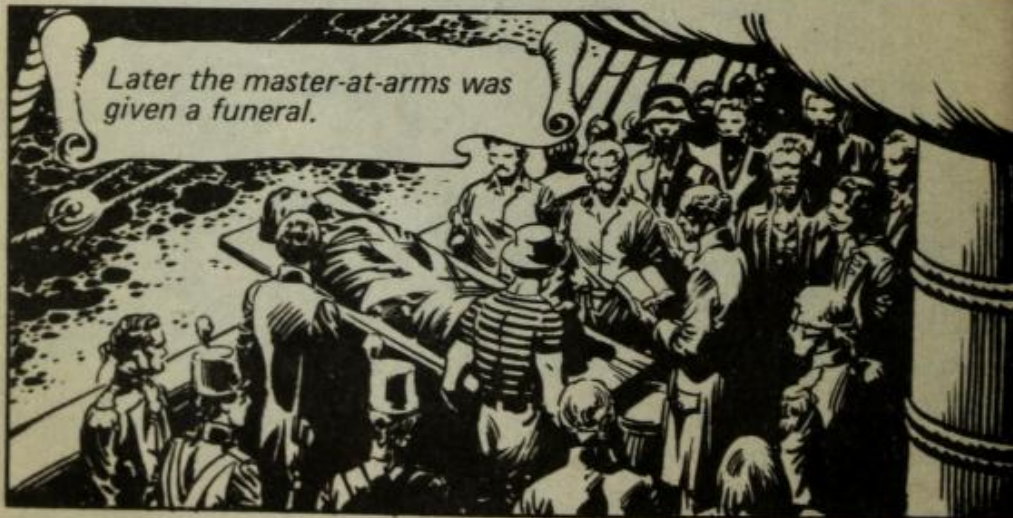
POCKET CLASSICS

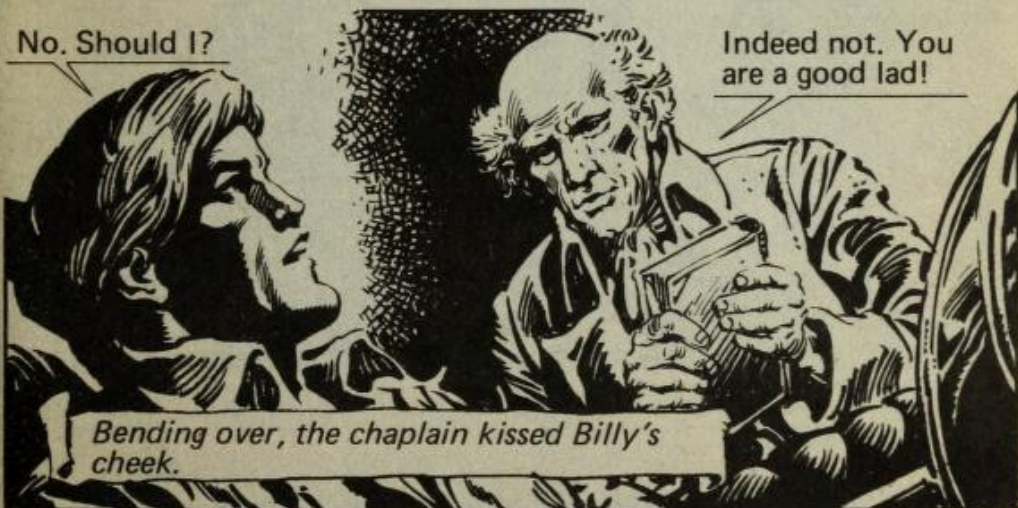
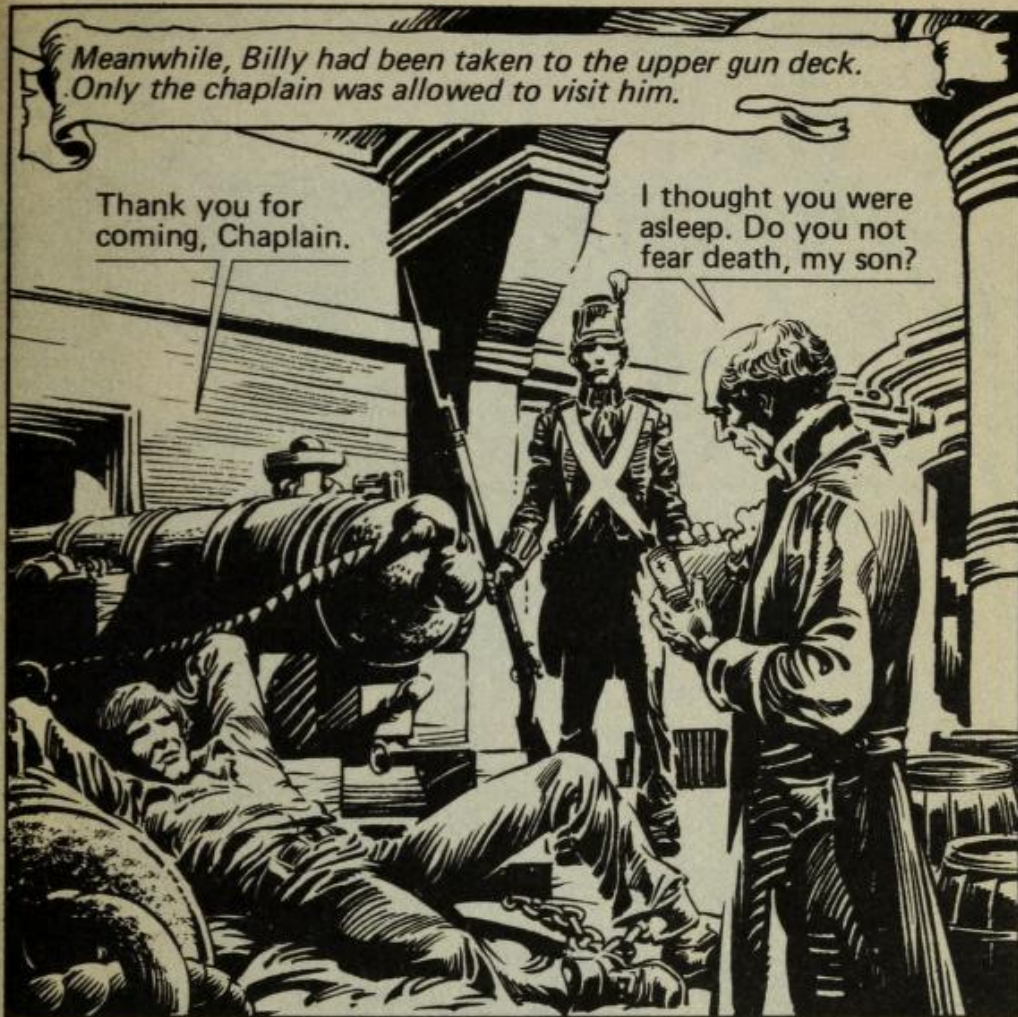
Captain Vere chose to tell Billy himself, alone. As they came from the room, Billy looked calm, but the captain looked as if his own son were going to die.

Everyone was called on deck. The captain told the men that the master-at-arms was dead; a court had tried a man and found him guilty; and that the prisoner was to be hanged in the early morning watch.

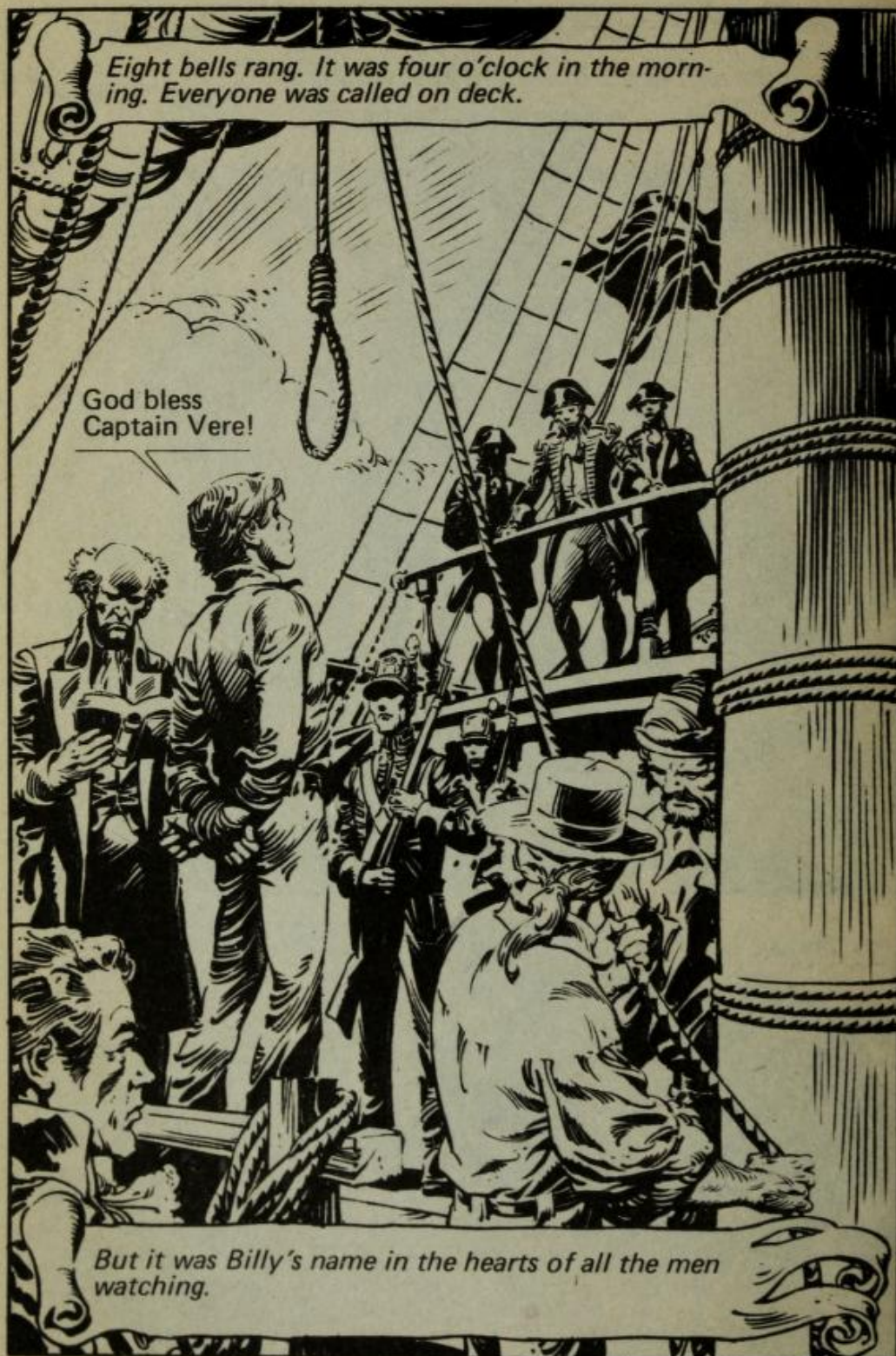


Later the master-at-arms was given a funeral.





POCKET CLASSICS



A sound like that of a storm filled the air. It quickly stopped as the starboard watch was sent below. Soon the larboard watch was put to work.



Billy's hammock was filled with ballast. After his body was put in, the sailmakers sewed it up. Again, everyone was called on deck.

POCKET CLASSICS

Billy Budd had a simple funeral. Sea birds circled overhead.



The same sound of a storm filled the air. The men were restless. The sound stopped when the drums beat, calling the men to the cannons for practice.

Billy Budd



COMPLETE LIST OF POCKET CLASSICS AVAILABLE

CLASSICS

- C 1 Black Beauty ✓
- ✓ 2 The Call of the Wild ✓
- ✓ 3 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ✓
- ✓ 4 Dracula ✓
- ✓ 5 Frankenstein ✓
- ✓ 6 Huckleberry Finn ✓
- ✓ 7 Moby Dick ✓
- C 8 The Red Badge of Courage ✓
- ✓ 9 The Time Machine ✓
- C10 Tom Sawyer ✓
- C11 Treasure Island ✓
- C12 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea ✓
- C13 The Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes ✓
- ✓ 14 Gulliver's Travels ✓
- ✓ 15 The Hunchback of Notre Dame ✓
- ✓ 16 The Invisible Man ✓
- ✓ 17 Journey to the Center of the Earth ✓
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